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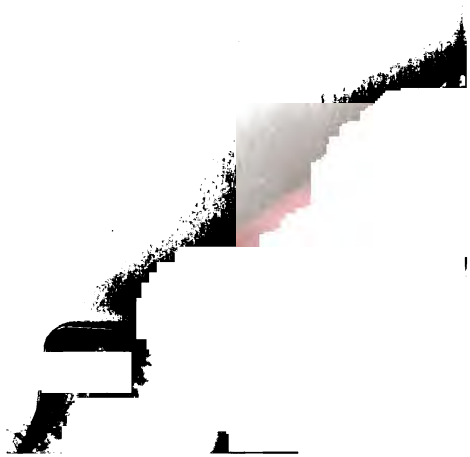

[Hart, Elizabeth Anna]

MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL;

AND

MR. JOHN JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.

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MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.

PART I.

MARRIED six weary weeks to-day!
How sad is life that was so gay!
How desolate the street appears—
Alas, that I must live in it!
I see the houses through my tears,
And do not like the sight one bit!

How can I pass the heavy hours
Without my darling birds and flow'rs—
A scamper on the lawn—a ride—
With other girls a merry chatter,
Where we our partners can deride,
The merits of our dress decide,
And settle much important matter!

A comfortable luncheon, then
Croquet, or archery; and tea
With half a dozen lively men
Who come to laugh and flirt with *me!*

O life was sweet and beautiful!
Its pretty pleasures all my own;
O life of life was very full,
And ev'ry minute lived alone!

And ev'ry minute was so strong,
It brought its little new-born bliss,
Sweeping in tender light along,
Or leaving shadows like a kiss.

What lent its glory to the flow'r,
And gave the nightingale her pow'r,
And made the sky so very blue?
My little heart could it be you?

My little heart, why did you beat
As if delighted to be me!
O, was it youth that was so sweet?
Or was it youth's sweet liberty?

They said I danced when I should walk
(My gay feet worked my gayer will),
They said I laughed when I should talk,
And chattered when I should be still.

I'd wake with laughing in the night—
Ah, happy nights I can't forget!—

I'd catch my dreams, they were so bright,
And find my thoughts were brighter yet.

I'd wink my little eyes and peep,
With slumber waging weary strife ;—
It seemed so hard to be asleep
And lose the smallest bit of life !

Of life that moved with airy sway,
Like singing music—making play
Like wavelets dancing on the sea
In even measures—all for me !

And when the sun illumed the dark,
I'd sing good morning to the sky,
And wake the little lazy lark,
And curtsey to the butterfly.

O, sweet to flutter 'mid the grass,
In charming dews the wise condemn,
And when the busy swallows pass
To nod my friendly head at them !

It did the little squirrels good
To see a thing as gay as I,
When I came running through the wood
To hide from the delighted sky ;

The quaint old cuckoo said his say,
I mock'd him with my artful word ;
I think he knows not to this day
Whether I am a girl or bird !

'Twas 'cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo,' he
And 'cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo,' I;—
It was the grandest sight to see
That puzzled cuckoo round me fly;

In ev'ry bird I found a friend—
A confidante in ev'ry leaf;
The little breezes would attend,
The robins knew I was their chief.

The good old trees would rustle so,
In stately gossip when I came;
The grass that kissed my feet, I know,
Kissed no one else's quite the same.

Life was a most triumphant fact!—
What could my ecstasy destroy?
I did not care to think or act—
Just to be living was a joy!

O lovely earth! O lovely sky!—
I was in love with nature, I;
And nature was in love with me;—
O, lovely life—when I was free!

And then I'd spread my shining wings,
And fly away without a care
To those bewitching balls and things
Where I discovered I was fair.

And when I found how fair I am,
I felt a new delight in life,

Nor guessed that Mr. Jerningham
Had asked me from Papa as wife.

How vexed I was when I was told!
I hardly could my patience keep;
And then Papa began to scold,
And then poor I began to weep.

But one thing's pleasant, I confess;
Marriage a trousseau doth entail;
I had to choose a satin dress,
And was allowed to wear a veil!

The wedding day came all too soon—
I'd rather it had not been mine—
But still I liked the Honeymoon
At Paris and the pretty Rhine,

And now I've not a thing to do,
And nobody to say a word;
I've got to keep my house, 'tis true,—
I keep a house!—it's too absurd!

She's such a clever woman, Cook,
I heartily dislike her look;
She really seems to fancy I
Know nothing useful 'neath the sky,
And with her stuck-up chin and head
Her silence is a thing to dread!
And then when she begins to speak,
She asks such dreadful questions—O

How many quarts of milk a week
Shall I require? how *should* I know!
And what may be the price of coals?
How many tons will be enough?
Shall she take quartern loaves, or rolls?
And do I want the kitchen stuff?

I've ordered dinner—'tis a fact
That I was frightened at the act!
Says I, 'A leg of lamb you'll get,'
Says she, 'It's not in season yet;'
So turning somewhere for relief,
I said, 'Then get a leg of beef:'
She look'd so keenly in my face
She made me feel the whole disgrace,
And so I cried, 'Get anything,'
And ran up stairs to play and sing:—
I hope we'll have *some* dinner, though,
Or John may be displeased, you know.

Why did they make me marry him?
Life *was* so bright and *is* so dim!
I cannot understand why men
Should stop their growth at five feet ten;
I meant my husband to be tall,—
Short men have such a shabby look,—
And then his nose is rather small,
Without a notion of a hook.

I wish he was a barrister,
Then he could talk and cause a stir,
And wear a lovely curly wig,
To make his face look brown and big;
A captain in a uniform
Might take a woman's heart by storm;
And sailors are the best of all,
Such charming partners at a ball:
But just a banker—don't you see,
  It is so very tame and flat—
Why *did* he want to marry me?
  How *could* Papa consent to that?

John Jerningham's a horrid name!
Alas! my cards must bear the same!

I do not think that it is wise
  Young men should be so spick and span;
  John is so dreadfully precise,
    He ought to be a clergyman!
  He says I am untidy—he
    Dislikes to see a hair astray,
  And everything I use, you see,
    He thinks I ought to put away.
  He will not let me walk alone,
    Studies he likes me still to con—
  O, how I wish I was my own,
    And never had belonged to John!

At breakfast it is rather nice—
  Making the tea is like a play;
Only he gives me good advice,
  And tells me how to spend the day.
At ten he goes—always at ten,
The most precise of business men:
At six I know he will return,
But rather stiff and taciturn,
Till dinner makes him kind and good—
  I think men look a little small,
They *do* depend so much on food,
  While we need hardly dine at all!

The dinner over, as I rise,
  He, leaning in his easy chair,
Regards me with approving eyes,
  Saying my muslin dress is fair.
But if he wants to kiss me, then
(Another tiresome way with men)
I pout—because it is no joke
Saluting lips perfumed with smoke.

TO-NIGHT we're going to a ball;
John says I must not dance too much—
John says I must not waltz at all—
He thinks men murder with their touch!

At least I have a lovely dress,
And when my hair is frizzled dry,
Done in a fashionable mess,
It's quite the thing—and so am I!
I've got a charming little waist,
And I can make it smaller yet;
John hates to see me tightly laced,
But now and then I must forget!
My skirt is gored delightfully,
With train so skilfully design'd,
It floats away three yards from me,
While I sail on nor look behind.

. . . . . .

Well—it is over—let it go—
When I was ready for the ball,
John said my dress was cut too low,
And talked about a horrid shawl,
I felt that I should like to cry,
So down I sat and tried to pout;
John fixed me with his steady eye,
And said I should not go without.

Most kindly he remarked, 'You know
There's no occasion you *should* go!'
And then he gave a little laugh,
And fetched me my Chantilly scarf.

My robe was of another lace,
And as he wrapped my shoulders round,
I thought if he but turned his face,
I'd dash the thing upon the ground.

The room was splendid—hung with flags,
And flow'rs as bright as they were sweet,
And all the ladies dressed in bags
Straight from their waists down to their feet.
Fixed on John's arm, I moved about,
And thought he might be more alert,
And wished some man would take me out,
That I once more might dance and flirt.

The moonlight through the window came
(I wonder if it likes a ball),
And laid itself in silver flame
Across the floor and up the wall:
The dancers did not pause or start,
Affrighted at its beauty sweet;
I think the girl can have no heart
Who treads the moonlight 'neath her feet!

Invited by my host Sir James,
I helped to form a prim quadrille.

He gaily told the people's names,
And why some danced and some sat still.
To Lady Græme John took me then,
And said, 'I'll leave you safely here:
I'm wanted by some other men
To play a little rubber, dear!'
I did not tell him I was glad
(I wonder if I was or no!)
Would he have minded if I had?
I thought it cool of him to go,
So talked and laughed with Lady Græme—
A pretty woman, kind and gay;
And she politely did the same,
And so the moments slid away.

Up came a man I liked to see
Extremely—for he look'd at me.
Just six feet two (delightful height),
With lazy eyes and classic nose,
And teeth that flashed, they were so white,
And air of indolent repose,
And trailing whiskers, rather red,
But quite brown hair upon his head.
He sauntered up with languid air,
To Lady Græme he murmured low,
'Aw—real-ly—aw—I don't much care—
Aw—introduce me—don't you know?'
And with a glance politely free,
Just with his eyebrows signed at me.

The waltz is forming—off we go—
How could I think of John's desire?
He danced divinely—to and fro,
We whirl away and never tire.
The stately frizzle of my hair
Just hung about a little bit.
My scarf? I'd left it on a chair,
I'm sure I had no need of it—
Reflected from the shining glass,
I saw our charming figures pass,
And must confess I thought we were
A most *distingué*-looking pair.

Enraptured at the rapid flight,
My heart leapt up with new delight,
And sparkled in my lips and eyes,
And flushed my cheek with rosy dyes.
Gay words and gayer laughter sprang,
As round and round we lightly swang.
When in came John! appalling sight!
Ah, John, you should have stayed away:
Is it the moonlight makes you white?
Or is it passion kept at bay?

The naughty spirit seized me then,
Which makes us women tease the men.
As John stood scowling in the door,
I danced more wildly than before.
The music ceased, so cease we must,
My partner bent and whispered praise,

John saw how he admir'd, I trust—
He ne'er look'd so in all his days.

The roses on the window lay,
And almost touch'd me as I stood.
They were as good as they were gay,
Alas! I felt more gay than good!
Roses are very beautiful,
And innocent, and sure to please:
But even roses would be dull
Without their butterflies and bees!

Quite cool and pleasant, John came up,
Offered his arm, and said 'twas late.
'I will not go before I sup.'
'You must,' he cried, 'the horses wait.'

He held himself extremely high:
I did not like his looks by half,
I think I'd have begun to cry,
Only I felt inclin'd to laugh!
He wrapp'd me in the cloaking room,
With air of most portentous gloom;
No carriage waiting in the street,
He called a cab and off we went;
I kept on dancing with my feet,
And felt too lively to repent.

Arrived at home, he paid the fare,
In silence led me to my room,
In silence placed me in a chair,

Then stood erect to speak my doom—
Saying in a voice with anger fraught,
'I told you not to waltz, I thought.'

My spirit rose at being chid—
And leaning languid in my chair
I answered, 'Did you?—so you did—
It's late, I think—I'll brush my hair.

O John! you frowned with such a frown,
I almost thought you'd knock me down,
And felt excited, pleased, and vext,
Wondering what was coming next.

Silent he stood—in silence looked—
And tho' my wrath I nursed and cooked.
It gave my heart a little turn,
That silence was so strangely stern.

Then with reproachful solemn face
He sat him in my writing place,
And took my paper, pen and ink—
Well, John, that's rather cool, I think!
And so he wrote and wrote and wrote—
And I my ringlets brush and plait,
As he does up each tiny note,
I wonder what he means by that!
He rings the bell, and Fanny knocks—
'Three letters for the letter-box!'
Then turns to me with tranquil air—
'The summer-night has met the day,

You *must* have finish'd with your hair :
But I have something still to say :
I shall not take you out at all
This spring to any other ball.
I've written notes to Mrs. Payne,
To Lady Vaux and Colonel Vane,
Explaining that we cannot go.'
'Oh John ! you never have done so !'
'Of course I have !' his eyes flash light ;
'My wife to waltz I do not choose :
I've learned the task she taught to-night,
Another lesson I refuse.'

'Oh John ! you know—I never meant'—
'It is too late,' he said, and went.
And I, undrest, began to weep,
And fairly cried myself to sleep.

WE met at breakfast—hard and cold
Was John—and I was dignified—
I thought it was not right to scold
And then shut up a six weeks' bride!
I read my letters, he the news,
Calmly I handed him his tea,
And his politeness can't refuse
To cut a slice of ham for me.
And now and then a look I slid
Out of the corner of my eyes;
But glance at me, not once I did
From this philosopher surprise,
And then I sighed—a little loud,
And then I rattled with my cup,
But John read on serene and proud,
And never once—not once—looked up!

He does not love me!—whence the thought,
Or why it came—or how it fell—
Or if I cared—or what I sought—
Or false or true I cannot tell.

He rose at ten to say good-bye,
I said it too—I think he sigh'd;
There *was* a trouble in his eye,
And I again felt dignified!

O dreary, dreary drawing-room,
Where never merry sound is heard—
O little chamber full of gloom,
The cage of a reluctant bird!

There is a shadow in the street:
There is a shadow on my heart.
O sky and grass you are so sweet:
O London house how sad thou art!

I feel the outer shadow creep
To meet the shadow in my breast,
And shut my eyes or I should weep
With such a weary sense of rest.

O could I stand beneath the sky,
With shining grass about my feet,
And catch one bright blue butterfly:
I think that life would be too sweet!

The shadows darken as I sit
Around this home that is my own:
I feel a sudden fear of it,
I am so lonely and alone.

How wearily the hours pass by,
And yet the day is beautiful.
O *was* he sorry? *did* he sigh?
O I am young, and life is dull!

It is no use that John should talk,
How can I stay at home all day?

My head aches—I *must* take a walk,
What harm can happen on the way?
Through half a dozen streets I run;
All nicely dressed: free as the air:
Free as the wind: gay as the sun:
If John is cross I will not care!

I enter on a lovely lawn,
Where trees a happy shadow made;
I ask the name—almost in scorn,
'Tis Kensington,' the woman said.

O lovely lawn of Kensington,
How very good and kind thou art,
To put such radiant colors on,
To please one little longing heart!

Fair is the life by any led,
That holds no brighter joy than this,
The pleasant sky above the head,
And daisy buds the feet to kiss.

Who do I see beneath the trees?—
Unless my vision plays me false,
That charming fellow sure to please—
My partner in that wicked valse!

O garden full of new delight!—
He says gay words; I make replies;
I know he is enchanted quite,
And he admires me with his eyes:

We walk, we sit, we sit, we walk—
O happy chance that brought us there!
How I enjoy his sprightly talk
And knowledge that he thinks me fair!
He slyly hints with half a smile
At how I vanished from the ball,
And lets me understand the while
That when *I* went, joy went from all!
He's not a thing to do, I see,
But talk to me 'neath summer sky;
The hours pass on, and so do we,—
If he is happy, so am I.
I'm flirting just a little bit—
But flirting keeps a girl alive:
I turn my watch and look at it—
I almost scream—'tis half-past five!

I go in haste—he sees me home;
I beg him not—he says he will:
I'm so afraid lest John should come;
The terror almost makes me ill.
When Westbourne Terrace is in sight
I stop him firmly, once for all,
To persevere he's too polite,
But begs to be allowed to call:
I faintly murmur, 'Number eight;'
He shakes my hand with tender touch,
And laughing cries, 'I see you're late—
I fear the husband scolds too much!'

O grand escape ! I'm barely in
When John comes knocking to the door ;
I feel as if I'd sinned a sin,
I never felt so strange before.

At dinner John is solemn still ;
I'm too excited far to eat,
But John would eat or well or ill
(Men never seem to turn from meat,
Their dinner never comes amiss).
When to the drawing-room I go
He does not ask me for a kiss—
He does not care for me, I know !
How can I tell him that I did
The very thing he most forbid ?—
I think he'll kill me ; but I'll try,
I hope I could not act a lie.

In stately pride our tea we drink,
Now is the time to speak, I think ;
But John speaks first, 'Pray have you read
The book I marked for you ?' he said.
'I ? no ; I never opened it ;
You spend your time as you think fit.'
Grimly he answered, 'Will you play
The symphony you learned to-day ?'
'I did not learn one.' 'Ah, indeed,
You did not care to play or read ;
What *did* you do ?' What *could* I say ?
Tell him the truth I never can,

Which is—I walked about all day
With an extremely pleasant man!
And so I murmur, 'Many things,'
And from my fingers pull the rings.

John looks at me, I look at him—
His eye is stern, and mine is dim:
He takes a book—some pamphlet light,
Nor says another word that night.

HE called to-day—sent up two cards;
For the first time I learned his name—
Arthur Fitzmaurice, of the Guards:
O how I wish John's was the same!
I thought I must not let him in—
Visits from men John holds a sin,
Unless he's present when they call,
To make the talk political:
But just as 'Not at home,' I cry,
His entrance is his sole reply—
So easy, smiling, tall, and gay,
I'm charmed he did not go away.

I chatter like a merry girl;
He talks of half a hundred things—
Of how to wear the latest curl,
Of how divinely Nilsson sings,
Of how the Prince upon the Nile
Has bravely bagged his crocodile,
While Ministers will hardly dare
To bag a paltry Irish *mare;*
Of how no fellow in the land
Would undertake to understand
Or for the hidden meanings look
That give its *weight* to Browning's 'Book,'

While beauties stare him in the face
In every line of 'Lady Grace,'
And 'tis a work of love alone
To make those beauties all his own.

Each little word is slyly meant
To introduce a compliment,
And show (although he does not stare)
He thinks me pretty, nice, and fair,—
Just in the way some people can—
The way that makes a pleasant man!

Ah, as we speak the present flies,
And forms the past before our eyes!
With half a smile and half a sigh,
So earnest is his last good-bye,
That Juliet's words I could repeat,
And own the pain of parting sweet.

A FORTNIGHT since a word I writ!
Each day was beautiful and kind,
But, somehow, when I'd done with it
It left a little sting behind.

I can't believe that they are wrong—
The converse sweet and merry walk:
Why should I have my legs and tongue
If 'tis a sin to run and talk?

I wish I'd let John truly know,
But then the meetings he'd forbid,
And shut me up and scold me so,
And be annoyed at all I did.

If Arthur was my husband, then
I'd never talk with other men,
A *tête-à-tête* with him would be
The most enchanting chat for me—
He is so charming and refined,
And all I say he seems to mind;
So 'tis not that I could not prove
Good wife to husband that I love;
But that *my* husband's not the one
I can like best beneath the sun.

Why, since the evening of the ball
He hardly spoke to me at all
Until last night, all suddenly,
He sat him down and lectured me:
He call'd me headstrong, giddy, wild,
And chid me like a naughty child,
Then spoke of meekness, patience, faith,
The woman he could love till death,
'The perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command.'
'*I'm* ready to command,' I said;
And then I cried and hung my head:
He asked me did I love him? what
Could I reply?—I answered not!
And then he stared in sudden gloom,
And stalked about and left the room.

Why did he marry me? I see
He does not care a bit for me!
Ah, if he did, he would not scold,
Nor wish me to be dull and old;
His happy love would gild my days
With glances fond and tender praise;—
A petted Queen, I'd shine on all,
And then—ah, me!—I'd give a ball:
I softly ask'd him if I might
(By Arthur's generous advice);
His answer was uncivil quite—
O John, your manners are not nice!

And Arthur says men should not reign,
That is the woman's place, 'tis plain;
And Arthur says such eyes as mine
  Would change to day the darkest night,
And those who think such eyes divine
  Are those for whom they wear their light.

To lock the sunlight in a room,
  Trying to make it shine by rule,
And keep the outer world in gloom,
  Would be the action of a fool;
And he who'd shut *me* up alone,
  Nor let me fling about my rays,
But keep me only for his own
  Is just as silly, Arthur says.

You plant a lily in a cave—
  Poor, pretty thing, it can but die;
You would enchain the ocean wave—
  It dares you as it dances by!
It mocks you with its ceaseless foam,
  Your dripping heads you fain would free,
And little laughters slyly come
  For him who would enchain the sea.

And I must gently fade away,
  And like the lily end my days,
Or like the waves be brave and gay,
  And spurn my fetters, Arthur says.

AND day by day the days glide on,
And I glide on and cannot stay;
I wonder if the busy sun
Is tired of always making day!

Weary with an excess of light,
I think he holds the dark a boon;
I think he'd like to see the night,
And would enjoy to be the moon!

O change, I hold you best of all;
Nothing is good that must remain;
Vanish my street—my houses fall,
And let me be a girl again!

TO-NIGHT we dined with Lady Græme;
I wore my sky-blue silk—the same
At Mrs. Payne's I'd meant to wear,
Had John allowed me to be there.
Fanny my hair did well enough,
Over a most triumphant puff.
It rose a yard above my head,
Crowned by a wreath of roses red.

Sir James, goodhumored, frank, and gay,
Received us in his pleasant way,
And cried 'At half a dozen balls,
And all in vain, I've sought your face:
Believe me, in those garnished halls
None shone with such a saucy grace—
Alas why do you stay away?
Youth is the time to make your play.'

I answer'd coolly, 'Yes—'tis so—
My husband will not let me go,
All invitations he's refused.'
John blushed at that, and looked confused,
But I was glad that he should see
His dear Sir James thought much of me.

'Twas a large party—we were late !
Sir James said, ' Ring the dinner bell
For one young man we will not wait.
Arthur's a most uncertain swell.'
The door flew open as he spoke—
' Captain Fitzmaurice' said the man,
I almost thought it was a joke,
And little shivers through me ran.

I bit my lips and sat upright ;
I blushed and felt extremely hot ;
He bowed to me with air polite,
Looking as if he saw me not—
Nodded at others, smiled at some,
And said, ' Aw—aw—I'm glad I've come !'

When good Sir James, as bridal guest,
Politely gave his arm to me,
I thought that he must be in jest ;
For I forgot my dignity.
It seemed so strange that I should go
Heading the grand procession so.

The table was extremely gay
With little heaps of fruit and flow'rs,
And all the dinner hid away,
And eating it took two good hours.
Arthur sat opposite to me,
And never seemed my face to see ;
Asking the lady at his side,
' Aw—really—is that girl a bride ?'

I thought it wrong to make pretence
With such a show of innocence,
And something whispered very low,
John never would have acted so!

The ladies to the drawing-room go,
'Tis deadly lively there, I own;
Why is it so extremely slow,
When women find themselves alone?
We sit about and mildly chat,
Each sips and stirs her coffee cup;
But conversation's rather flat,
We want the men to brisk us up.

They come, and round my chair they crowd,
My spirits rise, my heart is free;
Some murmur low, some chatter loud
And all that's said is said to me.
I bandy repartee and wit,
With smiles their nonsense I reward,
Whatever's said I answer it,
And all I say the men applaud!

John stands and talks to Lady Græme
Unsympathetic, calm, and cool;
But then John always is the same,
To care for *that* I'd be a fool.

But Arthur gnaws his handsome lip
And looks with thunder in his eyes
While careless I my coffee sip,
Smiling in innocent surprise!

'Tis charming to attract and please,
But still more sweet it is to tease.

Ah! he approaches—listlessly—
  Dropping a sentence here and there—
Looking at prints he does not see—
  Pretending not to see my chair—
Stopping a moment to address
  Some one he hardly saw or knew.
—I know that manner purposeless,
  That always has an end in view!

He leaned upon my chair and said,
  'When shall we have another valse!'
His whiskers almost touch my head—
  I'm glad my chignon was not false!

I try to speak, but I am dumb!
  'Tis this concealment makes me shy—
Instead of words hot blushes come;
  Arthur may triumph now—not I!

Softly my drooping glance I raise,
To meet Sir James's wond'ring gaze!
All out of countenance I rise;
  I know not what I say or do—
There's such amazement in his eyes,
  And something like reproval too!

Where is my self-possession? O!
  I should not have jumped up like this!

(I wish I was unmarried tho';
Then flirting never came amiss!)

'Sit down,' said Arthur in my ear,
And down I sat abashed and weak;
I wish I had not felt that fear—
I wish I'd had the wit to speak!

Uncounted thoughts come rushing in;
My self-approval to destroy;
And every thought is like a sin,
And every sin is like a joy.
Deceit is such an ugly word—
I did not utter the untrue—
John's strictness really is absurd;
O John, the fault is all with you!
Life is so innocent and sweet,
I must be happy, and I will!
My youth is lying at my feet;
Can I the radiant creature kill?
Must I blot out the perfect sun?
Fling the unopened buds away?
Nor let the silver river run?
My heart leaps up and *will* be gay.

My life is such a lovely game,
It charms me ere I understand,
With little joys, like birds, so tame,
They come a-flying to my hand.

Why am I shamefaced and perplexed?
And why is John so cross and grave?
And why with Arthur am I vexed?
Why am I not serenely brave?

Then Arthur whispered, 'How you blush?'
I answered angrily, 'Don't talk—
You must not call again—and—hush—
I'll never meet you when I walk.'
'Alas!' he cried, 'but then—'tis true—
You can't prevent *my* meeting *you!*'

I tried to look a little grim,
But down he sat and rattled on;
My ready laughter answered him;
My fears are fled—my grief is gone.

He talked in such a pleasant strain,
With tones so soft and wit so bright,
I was my merry self again,
And quite forgot my foolish fright.

I wore a rosebud in my dress,
He vowed for him that bud should shine,
(Just fancy John in such distress
For anything because 'tis mine!)
I held the rosebud in the air,
And uttered half a dozen noes.
He said than me it was less fair;
I told him that MY name was Rose.

He caught my hand—he snatched the flower,
Kissed it, and laid it 'neath his vest,
Saying that from that happy hour
He'd always love the roses best.
The million stars that deck the skies
Have no such meaning for his eyes,
Nor priceless gems such joy impart
As one small rosebud on his heart.

Sir James approached me very grave,
Enquired coldly, would I sing?
His altered looks I laughing brave,
And could not think of such a thing!
Like sentry at my side he stood,
And all the pleasant chat is o'er.
I think Sir James is very good,
But just a little of a bore.
John took me home grave as a judge;
No word was spoken on the way;
He seems to owe me quite a grudge;
He's always sulky when I'm gay.

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Wrapped in a peignoir fresh and clear,
I view my face and find it fair.
John enters then, and standing near
Watches me while I brush my hair.

'Rose, do you ever think at all?'
'Oh yes,' I said, 'I often do;

'I think I'd like to give a ball,
And not to be reproved by you.'
'But do you ever think of life,
How great it is—how fair might be;
And of the duties of a wife,
And kind submission due to me?'

A troop of little thoughts like sighs,
All uninvited fill my breast;
Sweet little thoughts of woods and skies,
And moments fetterless and blest.

'And do *you* ever think,' I cry
'That duties also fall to you,
And since you chose to wed me—why
You ought to make me happy too?'

He viewed me sternly where he stood—
'Ah, Rose! your life might joy impart.
If you were gentle, kind, and good,
With woman's wisdom in your heart.'

I twisted round each glossy curl,
I mocked him with my saucy eyes:
'I'm not a woman, but a girl—
I'd rather far be fair than wise!'

'Time is so pitiless,' he said;
'Shall time be pitiless in vain?
When youth is fled and beauty dead,
What will remain?—what will remain?'

Laughing, I cried, 'Ah! see the foal,
It scours the field, it can't keep still,
The kitten— little merry soul—
For ever plays, for ever will;
The horse is steady, and the cat
Is dull as you can wish, I'm sure;
She sits all day upon the mat,
And licks her paws and looks demure.

'Oh, let me while I'm young be gay,
Just to be happy never hurts;
When I am old I'll sit all day,
And read your books and mend your shirts!'

I let my golden hair run down,
And on the ground its beauty trail;
And, as an answer to his frown,
Laughed at him through the shining veil.

With angry grasp my arm he took—
His temper from its bondage broke.
'I *will not* let you speak and look
As but to-night you looked and spoke.'

Strange shadow flits athwart his brow,
Strange light makes glitter in his eyes,
A moody passion shakes him now,
The shadow's gone—the glitter dies.

His face my spirit *shall* not daunt,
I *will* not let him win the day,

So give my voice a little taunt
And smiling up at him, I say,
'You'd like to beat me.' 'Yes, I would,'
He cried, 'my anger I'd restrain,
But if I thought 'twould do you good
I'd beat you now and yet again!
In marriage there are double lives,
Where each to each must law allow;
Men have a right to beat their wives
When women break their marriage vow.'
'*I* break my vow?' 'Yes every day.'
He turned to where I breathless sat,
'You swore to honor and obey.'
'O dear!' I cried 'who thinks of *that?*'

'Think of it now you must and can,
And answer ere you leave this place—
Why did you blush to meet that man!
How dared you flirt before my face?'
'What man?' asked I. He did not stir;
And so I softly cried—'Alack!
And would you really, John, prefer
That I should flirt behind your back?'

He grasped my arm—my arm is small—
He left a mark—(I see it now)
And cried, 'You shall not flirt at all,
A glance may break a marriage vow!
I ask you where you met that man?'
How hard I strove to get away!

Tell him the truth I never can:
Ah, foolish girl! what can I say?

'I will not speak—ah, John, you hurt—
Ah, let me go.' 'Then answer quick.'
My heart beat fast—no longer pert,
I trembled, wept, felt faint and sick.

'Where did you meet that man before?'
'Ah, John, 'tis hard.' 'I do not care,
I will not let you pass that door
Till you have answered me, I swear.'

'I met him at Sir James's ball.'
'Where else?' 'I dont remember—I—
'Where else?' 'Ah, nowhere else at all.'
'I fear,' quoth he, 'you've told a lie.'

And so he went!—I cried all night,
Sitting defenceless in the cold,
Crying with sorrow and affright,
And horror at the lie I'd told.

I meant no harm those pleasant days,
'Twas the excitement led me on;
I liked the flattery and praise,
Things that I never get from John.

It was so sweet to wander out,
And then I was afraid to tell;
If John had let me run about
And chatter it had all been well!

I sought my bed with weeping eyes,
When morning broke and housemaids stirred.
At breakfast time I could not rise—
John left the house without a word.

AND all that day I stayed within,
And mused with horror on my sin;
And little did I do but cry—
I never thought I'd tell a lie!
I felt relief in my distress,
When I determined to confess;
To speak the truth to John once more
Would bring a calm unknown before.

But then my aching eyes I hid,
Thinking how great his wrath would be;
I'd done all things that he forbid,
And let a man make love to me!

Perhaps he'd beat me! once again
I was a child in shame and fear,
I knew the terror and the pain,
And thought John's hand would be severe.
I pushed my sleeve, made bare the mark
That dumbly threatened future harm:
Four little shadows—lightly dark—
Laid on the whiteness of my arm.

As on my boudoir couch I lay
My thoughts seemed melting quite away;
Slow and more slow the fancies crept,
I shut my eyes—I think I slept.

I dream that I am in a wood ;
  There is a rustling 'mid the leaves :
A robin comes to seek his food,
  A happy thing that never grieves.
Is it the color on his breast
  That makes a robin's heart so light ?
Or is it that we love him best
  And praise him when he's out of sight ?

The rustling wakes me—some one's near,
  Whose eye my sleeping face regards ;
I see with quite a pang of fear
  Captain Fitzmaurice of the Guards !

My hair is hanging all astray
  (If John had seen it, he'd complain),
I had been crying half the day,
  I felt I *must* be looking plain !
That's my first thought—my second is
  I'm wishing to be good and true :
John would be quite enraged at this,
  Why *did* he come ?—what *shall* I do ?

He shakes my hand—my arm is bare,
  The open sleeve the mark displays,
He cries, 'The villain ! did he dare ?'
  His lazy eyes are in a blaze,
A little kiss is on my hand,
  I hang my head and blush with shame,
Wishing to make him understand
  That John is not so much to blame.

While thus we stand the door's flung wide
John enters with a haughty stride,
The rightful master of the place,
With dreadful anger in his face.

I snatched my hand from Arthur—ran
To John; 'I was asleep,' I cried,
And he looked at me as *he* can
And as no other can beside!

Coolly he turned to Arthur (then
I quite admired him), calm his tone:
'There's some mistake, sir—gentlemen
Don't call here when my wife's alone.'

On Arthur's face there broods a frown;
'A gentleman I think I'm styled—
Your wife's the prettiest girl in town—
Are you a man to beat this child?'

'*I* beat her?' John with scorn replied—
(I wonder did he recollect
His little lecture when he cried
Men should chastise and wives respect?
With lordly air he paced the floor
And said, 'I'll have no words of strife,
Captain Fitzmaurice—there's the door—
No man shall meddle with my wife.'

Captain Fitzmaurice blushed at this,
And cried, 'No child's more innocent,

And guileless as a child she is,'
And then he bowed to me and went.

I somehow felt quite proud of John,
I liked his cool, determined ways;
We were alone—Fitzmaurice gone;
John looked at me—I hid my face.

Now I must speak, or not at all,
I need not wait for strength to come,
So spoke beginning at the ball
And ending with this day at home:
I told him how I broke his laws,
And let each day its pleasure bring,
And how I liked to flirt, because
I found it such a pleasant thing;
How we had met outside the door,
And how he called upon me here,
And how I tried to speak before,
And how I lied to him from fear.

And when I had confessed my sin,
I felt so desolate and poor,
And drew my little shoulders in,
Thinking, 'He'll beat me now, I'm sure.'

He spoke no word he made no sign,
My breath came fast, my heart beat thick;
I thought, if this were wife of mine
I'd beat her and forgive her quick.

Slow speech at last—'You told a lie,
I doubt whate'er your tongue asserts,
I have no faith in falsehood, I,
Nor yet in faithless, fickle flirts!'
Out burst his wrath: 'I gave you trust;
I loved—O God, I was deceived!
My love is shattered in the dust:
Can I believe as I believed!'

Half fainting on the wall I lean,
I never knew my heart so stirred;
Oh, if each stroke had only been
A blow, and not a cruel word!
I cannot speak, I cannot cry,
I am so dull and turned to stone;
I hear a sound, a step, and I
Am in the chamber all alone.

HE came not near me all the day,
He came not near me all the night;
I almost wept my life away
In sorrow, penitence, and fright,
A letter's brought—what can it be?
A manly hand—I know it well,
He wrote two little notes to me
When I was only Rosa Bell.

Ah, were I Rosa Bell again,
And once again he made me wife,
He'd have no reason to complain,
I'd lead so excellent a life!
Why is it ever just too late,
When what was living is a ghost
We cease to quarrel with our fate,
And what is lost could prize the most?

THE LETTER.

'I LEAVE my home this night for Spain
And though for ever must remain
The sin, the sorrow, and the stain,
If time my feeling should constrain,
And take the anger from the pain,
In time I may return again.'

The letter fluttered from my hand,
I hardly seemed to understand;
Startled, bewildered, and confused,
My eyes to teach my brain refused.

For Spain?—I knew that sunny clime
Some claim upon his house could lay—
A trouble of the troubled time;
To vanish with a brighter day;

And he had meant to seek her skies,
And for a little while remain,
Just when he first beheld my eyes,
And bade a blithe good-bye to Spain.
An apt pretence the mission made
To leave the love his lips disown;
And I, repentant and afraid,
Weep o'er that ruined love alone.

THAT night Sir James sent in his card,
Saying it was a business call;
He bowed with such a stiff regard,
I trembling felt he knew of all:
He told me Mr. Jerningham
Had asked him to arrange affairs,
'And so,' he muttered, 'here I am,'
And ran his fingers through his hairs.

Bending my head I could not speak,
Trying to swallow down my tears,
Wondering how I'd grown so weak—
A day had done the work of years!

'While he's abroad, he settles it
That you should sojourn by the sea,
With some companion, as is fit—
But where and who?—How shall it be?'

'Whate'er you please,' I faintly said,
Viewing my life with vacant stare;
My life!—I was already dead,
And might be buried anywhere?

'So be it; I'll arrange it all,
And choose a place that's free from crowd;

To-morrow, if I may, I'll call
At half-past two;' he stiffly bowed.

My heart was ice, my face was flames—
I said, 'Oh won't you say "good-bye?"
Won't you shake hands with me, Sir James?
And bitterly began to cry.

The kind, good creature seized my hand—
'Crying,' he said, 'does good to none;
I'd really like to understand,
Poor little thing, what *have* you done?'

I told him all, from first to last—
So grave his looks my tears fell fast,
And I accepted my disgrace,
Reading my sentence in his face.

He whistled very soft and low,
And cried, 'It *is* a precious mess;
How could you treat your husband so?
He'll not forgive you soon, I guess!
Youth, beauty, health, friends not a few,
An easy income, pleasant lot,
A noble fellow fond of you—
What *could* you want you had not got?
To shatter such a life to bits!
And all for what?—for nothing! or
To let that foolish fellow, Fitz,
Say things he should be horswhipped for!

'Pray, do you know the use of life!
That no one's life is his alone?
Or what it is to be a wife
And call a good man's love your own?
And to be trusted with a trust—
Trusted and yet to be untrue;
To lay his honour in the dust
And break a heart that beats for you?'

Each word he said appeared a law
That if accepted might restore,
And each a picture seemed to draw
Of beauty never known before.
I caught a glimpse of Paradise—
Of lovely order, pleasure fit!
And then I hid my weeping eyes
Because I was shut out of it!

'And such a man as John—by Jove,
A woman might adore that man!
He loved you with a real love,
As only real fellows can!
How dared you play with life like that,
Making a trifle of a sin?—
Child! did you know what you were at,
Or half the danger you were in?'

'Danger? Ah yes!' I sadly cry—
'I've lost my husband's love, 'tis plain,
And told him such a wicked lie
We never can be friends again.'

He stared at me. 'Is that the whole?'—
While yet he frowned he almost smiled,
And softly said, 'God bless my soul!
How could John marry such a child?'
And then, with quite a tender look
(Cause for the change I could not find),
He talked like fathers in a book—
Papa was never half so kind.

'You have been frivolous and vain,
But yet I think your heart is good;
I think you will not err again,
I think you'll learn what women should:
And so, for fear the world should blame,
And mingle falsehood with the truth,
I'll take you home to Lady Græme,
And we'll protect your foolish youth!'

PART II.

THREE bitter months have passed away.
I could not—could not write a line:
But in the welkin dim and gray
A little star begins to shine.

A little star—though not for me,
Still by its light I wander on;
It *was* a sort of joy to see
A letter to Sir James from John!

Oh, sort of joy, how sad I am!—
He says he comes to-night, tho' late.
And 'hopes that Mrs. Jerningham
Will be at home at Number eight.'

So I'm to live with him again!—
It is his will to have it so;
Oh dreadful pleasure!—happy pain!
Oh senseless joy!—too real woe!

I cross the threshold of the door,
How sad I am—how changed is all!—
Am I the girl who oft before
Ran up the steps and through the hall?

If I am not that creature gay,
  I hope I'm something better far;—
Shine in the welkin dim and gray,
  Though not for me, my little star!

I sit beside the silent fire,
  The passing minutes work their will,
I have no wishes or desire,
  I never felt so very still.

I think I have wept out my tears,
  For future grief can none allow;
I've lost the knack of hopes and fears,
  And am a quiet woman now.

He likes a woman full of grace,
  By reason's law her heart to quell—
(Why did he like my happy face
  When I was only Rosa Bell?)

I see a girl's face in the glass,
  All light and shadow, smiles and tears;
Alas, it is my own! alas!
  And am I still what *that* appears?

He will not like me! Ah, I thought
  My heart had learned in sorrow's school,
And, once the teacher, now the taught,
  Had ruled my face with iron rule!

He will not like me! Oh despair!
  To meet him with such changeful eyes?

Ah! face that I believed so fair,
  Can you not look a *little* wise?

Alas! a distant sound I hear;
  The cruel moments reel and fly;
It is his step and he is here—
  If I could hide away and die!

. . . . .

I stood so friendless in the room,
  I felt so lonely and afar;
The house was filled so full of gloom,
  I could not see my little star!

John entered—shook me by the hand,
  And said, 'How cold the weather is!
The train was late, I understand.'
  This was our meeting—only this!

I said 'the train is always slow;'
  And then I laughed—indeed I did—
Tho' what I meant I do not know;
  Nor how the laughter from me slid.

He called it cold, and I was hot;
  I longed to look at him, but feared—
One glance I gave, and saw he'd got
  Upon his chin a great black beard.

I saw no higher—I was dumb—
  I vaguely wondered, *was* it he?

Or had some bearded Spaniard come
To pass himself as John on me?
I did not dare to look again—
How could I tell if it was John?
Never, unless I looked, 'tis plain—
And so my foolish thought ran on!
I wondered did he glance at me?
And did he find me beautiful?
And then I poured him out his tea;
And there we sat so cold and dull.

'How is Sir James?' 'He's very well.'
'And Lady Græme?' 'She's better too.'
'Has she been ill?' 'I cannot tell—
O yes—I mean—she did—you knew.'

And then I stopped and turned from John—
And colored up and bit my lips,
And played a little tune upon
The table with my finger tips.
John gazed intently in his cup,
And spoke with kindness in his tone:
(Why did my heart at once freeze up,
And wish he'd left me quite alone?)
'They have been good to you?' 'Oh yes,
Sir James is all that's good and kind,
And lady Græme—I like her less;
But she is pleasant and refined.'

I spoke with fluency and ease,
I felt provoked—I know not why;

John stirred his tea and crossed his knees,
And did not make the least reply.
And then I wished I had not spoke,
And wondered what would happen next,
And then the clock gave forth its stroke.
'Twas twelve—he rose—and I was vexed.
'Good night,' he said. 'Good night,' said I—
(How could we hope for a good night
He left me—I sat down to cry,
And of his face I'd had no sight!

AT breakfast it was just the same,
But I looked at him, bolder grown—
One little look—when, full of shame,
I met his eyes, and dropped my own:
His face was stern and resolute,
His mouth was hard as cut in steel;
Cold were his eyes, yet from them shoot
Looks that my very soul must feel.
He is my husband—once he loved;
His heart *was* mine, and might be still:
It was my hand, his hand removed,
That would have sheltered me from ill;
I asked my heart—could his be stirred,
That love once slighted to restore?
And still my heart replied one word,
And still that word was Nevermore!

And when the clock was striking ten,
He rose—I felt a dreamlike fear;
O most precise of business men—
He's gone—but was he ever here?
Is it a dream? am I alive?
Has life begun again for us?
And *can* I live—howe'er I strive,
In such a dreadful fashion thus?

THROUGH all that night I had not slept:
In cushion'd chair I languid lay,
Nor knew that slumber softly stepped,
And drew the outer world away;
And when the twilight's tender gloom
Gave shadows like primeval trees,
I felt the sounds within the room,
And then I felt the sounds were these.

'She was a welcome guest, you know—'
'Your kindness will be ne'er forgot—'
'And she's a charming creature, tho'
She has her faults—and who has not?'

Your pardon—tho' our friendly lives
Have known each other long—what then?
Men do not talk about their wives,
And their wives' faults with other men.'

'Tut tut—your words I shall not heed;
My love of chat you will not balk:
John, I must speak—I must indeed;
Be a good fellow—let me talk:
I lectur'd her too—on my life,
She took it sweetly—ne'er forgot:
And John, altho' she *is* your wife,
I was her friend when you were not!'

'I acted for the best, Sir James,
And think I did extremely right—
Pray have you seen the members' names
Who voted for the Church last night?'

'Confound the Church!—you needn't frown
I say you were too hard with *her;*
You should have let her see the town,
And shop, and dance, as girls prefer.

'Your wife's a beauty—others see,
And tell her—and she knows 'tis true.
John, if you'll be advised by me,
You'll let her hear the same from you.
With rosy cheeks and shining curls
You fell in love—for all your nous:
Men should not marry little girls,
Who want old women in the house!'

'Sir James when I require advice,
I'll ask for it, as custom is—
Pardon me, I may be too nice,
But I'm a trifle tired of this.'
'I'll do my duty—say my say—
We had her for three months with us.
She's young and skittish—fond of play—
A little vain and frivolous—
Most women are—shall men condemn?
Let us be wise and reason thus—
We'd better make the best of them,
As—bless their hearts—they do of us!

Don't leave your wife too much alone;
  Just to amuse and please her try.
John, you've a temper of your own;
  Don't frighten her, and make her cry!
She's a fine creature—good at heart,
  Without a particle of vice;
And if she shies or tries to start,
  Don't pull the curb—that's *my* advice!'

'Advice not asked for nor required;
  Thank you —I'll manage as before;
I think I'm just a little tired;
  Sir James, excuse me, there's the door!'

'With all my heart, and welcome too!
  From no man's house I'm turned out twice;
You managed nicely—didn't you?
  You stuck-up fellows scorn advice!'

The door was slammed, and all was still—
  John stood erect—I feared him most;
But left my chair against my will,
  And glided forward like a ghost.

John started—'*You?*' 'I was asleep;'
  Ah, once before those words I said!
Strange memories through my bosom creep:
  John feels them too—his cheek is red—

'I heard a little—he meant well—
  I'm sorry you have quarrelled—he

Was kinder than my words can tell;
And all my faults he told to me.'

'You did not like to hear your faults,'
Said John, 'you thought the thing ill-bred.'
'I'm—altered—now,' with little halts,
The words came out—and they are said!

He looked at me with steady look,
And then as steadily replied,
'I'm glad to hear it'—took a book—
Lighted the lamp and read—I sighed.

A LITTLE week has crept away,
We live together—John and I—
Just in the same too dreadful way—
But I feel ill—I hope I'll die!

Would he be sorry if I died?
Ah, yes—for once he loved me well;
Ah, yes—for once he did not chide,
When I was only Rosa Bell!

Those happy days would come again,
He would forget my foolish sin,
Forget the sorrow and the pain—
The dead such sweet remembrance win.

Would he plant flowers on my grave
His tears upon the blossoms fall?
And wear the golden ring he gave?
Alas! my finger is so small!

He'd say, 'She was so young and fair,
She was so gay and fond of life;'
And then he'd kiss the bit of hair
Cut from the head of his dead wife.

I think it would be sweet to die,
If held in memory so fair;

I'd like within my grave to lie,
'Neath little buds he planted there.

I'd like to live within his breast,
And feel, as years their softness shed,
That all his anger is at rest—
I know he'll love me when I'm dead!

Ah! shall I lie remember'd thus,
If death's cold hand shall draw me hence:
Or will he call me 'frivolous,'
And wed a woman full of sense?

I hate that woman—well I know
The sort of things she'll say and do;
I don't believe he'll like her, tho';
Women like her are liked by few.

Ah! once he lov'd me—now forgot,
The passion that his heart did move,
And when he lov'd—I lov'd him not—
And now he loves me not—I love!

LAST night I told him Mrs. Grey
Invited me to drive with her,
And said she'd call on Saturday—
'What should I do?' 'What you prefer.'
'I'd like to go with her.' 'Then go—
My wish to interfere is gone,
Unless for something that I *know*
'Tis better you should leave alone.'

I clasped my hands—I stood upright—
Whence courage came I never knew—
'John, I am anxious to *do right*,
And to obey your wishes too.'

The speech is made! what will he say?
Will he my penitence disdain?
O how I longed to run away,
Or be my naughty self again!

I thought his voice was grave and sad
(Why should he *grieve* at such a plan?),
As he replied, 'I'm very glad,
And I will help you if I can.'

Then it was over—there we sat
Without a word to say at all!

I, working stitches on my mat,
He, staring at the painted wall.
But mine is not a silent tongue,
Its words are winged for sudden flight;
I often chatter when its wrong,
And can't keep silence when it's right.
And so I cried, 'O if you will
I'll find it easy to be good:
There's such a charm in doing ill,
It cannot always be withstood!'

'You think so?' I had meant no harm
And found his satire hard to bear—
'Such women somehow find a charm
In all that's excellent and fair.'

'Well—say I am not one of these,'
And from his tone my tone I took,
'Some women find it hard to please,
And some give pleasure by a look!'

I looked at him—Ah foolish girl,
Whose vanity no slighting brooks,
'Before a swine don't cast your pearl:'
Said he, 'I do not care for looks!
You heard that foolish fellow Græme
Tell me to praise your air and grace;
But faith I won't! it is a shame
To praise a woman to her face!'

'I do not care for praise,' I cry,
'I wonder if you're saying sooth?'
A quick repentance fires his eye;
He had not meant to taunt my truth.
My ready blushes point the sting.
I ply my needle very fast;
O when will memory cease to bring
These bitter voices from the past?

He spoke—his tone was soft and low,
His words I never can forget.
'You told me the whole truth, I know,
That morning—when—when last we met.'
'I did,' I whispered, 'and I meant
To tell it had you not come in,
For I was really penitent,
Determined to confess my sin.
I did not only speak because—
Because—' I stammered—thought of Fitz—
'Did you believe me then?'—a pause—
'Well—no—or only little bits—
When I came home I was more wise,
A moment did my soul convince,
For then—I looked into your eyes,
And have believed you ever since!'

MY heart is lighter in my breast,
A little lighter—ah not much!
I think some pain has been carest,
And laid asleep by tender touch.
I think a terror is forgot—
A bitter voice has ceased to speak,
A tiny hope where hope was not
Is shining like a glowworm meek.

Our hearts are drawn a little near,
Our words come forth a little free,
I feel for him a shade less fear,
And he a shade less wrath for me.

He knows I'm wishing for the light,
He knows I know he knows I'm true,
He knows his hand can guide me right,
I know he knows I know it too!

And through it all one little gleam
Shines like a dawn where suns might rise—
O did I hear it in a dream,
Or did he really praise my eyes?
I care not if 'tis good or wise,
But I my sweetest comfort take,

Because he looked into my eyes,
And has believed me for their sake.

And in my heart he fixed a sting,
That lurks in its remoter nooks,
Vexing me more than anything—
He said he did not care for looks!

ANOTHER ball! He took me there,
He knew I'd keep his waltzing laws;
I put some lilies in my hair,
And wore a dress of shining gauze.
I'm growing very old and wise,
My vanity is gone, I see—
I only care to please *his* eyes,
And that is not from vanity!

We enter—people turn to gaze,
And utter little sounds of praise:
Sweet sounds to please a lover's ear
(Alas, how sweet to be so dear!)
I feel the blushes on my cheek—
I glance at him subdued and shy—
O silent face that will not speak,
Impenetrable lip and eye!

A dozen partners claim my hand,
I yield to each polite command;
I dance quadrilles, to waltz I long,
But pleasant things are always wrong!
That lovely whirling through the air,
That tuneful racing with the feet,
I hold a thing divinely fair,
What other exercise so sweet?

Three times I danced with Captain Groom,
A pleasant partner, gay and nice,
He took me to the supper room,
And brought me little cakes and ice.
A feathered fan I've left behind,
He flies for it, my loss confest,
Myself quite by myself I find,
The happy waltz detains the rest.

'Rose of the world!' a voice I hear—
I turn—I start—I almost scream—
Fitzmaurice whispers in my ear,
And takes my hand—is it a dream?
Too startled to be dignified,
Or show a particle of sense,
I just looked at him and I cried,
'O don't!' my folly was immense!

'O don't? O do—' he said and smiled,
His lazy eyes are strangely bright,
'O Rose that hast my heart beguiled,
Be just a little kind to-night.
He shall not hurt you—trust to me—
I'll save you from that wicked John,
To-morrow may I hope to see
A lovely Rose in Kensington?'

He smiled with that bewitching air,
He murmured in that coaxing tone,
And still his eyes pronounced me fair,
As if the world held me alone.

I scorned her then, as women can,
A creature vain and frivolous,
Whose folly had allowed this man
A sort of right to treat her thus:
John's wife! my eyes were opened wide,
For I had loved since last he smiled,
And felt why good Sir James had cried,
'How could John marry such a child!'
I had no heart to censure Fitz,
The fault was mine, and the disgrace.
I tore my bouquet into bits,
And looked my folly in the face.

I scorn myself—not him I scorn,
But left his side with footstep quick.
He cried, 'Ah, do not show a thorn,
Sweet little roses must not prick;'
I sought the ball-room—he pursued,
Crying, 'O blossom fair and false,
Come back to me, my pretty prude;
I know you'll not refuse to valse!'
His arm about my waist he slid,
Trying to lead me to the dance.
'And if the husband *has* forbid,
Why, we'll evade the husband's glance.'

Is this the man whose words could charm?
While yet he tries to lead me on
I glide from his insulting arm,
And walk across the room to John!

Touching him shyly with my hand,
  Losing the shame I can't endure,
Close to my husband's side I stand—
  I feel protected and secure!

Ah, if his noble eyes have seen,
  His noble spirit felt the scorn—
Will righteous anger come between?
  And kind protection be withdrawn?—
But while a hundred light alarms
  Whisper their little thoughts of gloom,
Sudden he clasps me in his arms
  And waltzes with me round the room!

That John could waltz I never knew,
  I'd never seen him dance at all,
As round and round we gaily flew,
  I think it an enchanting ball!—
I feel the pressure of his arm,
  My happy hair has touched his breast,
The dance has won a hidden charm;
  I could have died, I was so blest!

I FELT extremely shy next day
(Shyness is something new to me),
I thought I'd like to run away,
And never could pour out the tea!
I blushed when we good morning said
(And yet I tried so calm to seem),
Blushed when he handed me the bread,
And when he asked me for the cream.

But John—alas! he was so cold,
And on his forehead was a frown;
He was the very John of old,
The John who snubbed and kept me down!

I grew indignant; then I felt
No sweet permission to rebel,
Tried to forget he would not melt,
Tried to believe that all was well.

'Twas nearly ten—he was not kind—
He'd go, and never raise his eyes!
I flung discretion to the wind
(Alas, I never shall be wise!)—
'Does dancing disagree with you?'
I asked with my demurest air;
Ah, then he raised his eyes, 'tis true,
And colored to the very hair,

And in his eyes I something saw —
Something I had not learned a bit,
I could not learn it then for awe,
But think some day I'll fathom it.
'Tis gone—instead, an angry gloom,
A darkness like a thunder-cloud;
Anger, but why? at what? for whom?
I never saw him look so proud!
With sudden gesture up he rose,
His hasty steps the chamber pace,
Our glances meet, and I suppose
He read my wonder in my face.

'There is a question in your eyes,'
He said, 'in which I bear a part;
The answer in a region lies,
That never can invade your heart.
There is a life you cannot live,
A joy that could for all atone,
There is a death *that* life can give,
And still that death must be my own!
I see your heart is pure and good,
I see your rectitude and strength;
Ah, had I sooner understood—
Too late the lesson's learned at length?'

Transfixed I sat—what can it be?—
When almost grasped it slips and goes;
'Ah, speak of something else!' cried he;
'That man—did he insult you, Rose?'

Softly I murmured, looking down,
'I blame myself.' 'Not him you blame?
How kind your judgment!' Did he frown?
I raised my eyes he blushed for shame.
'Ah, pardon me!' he said, 'for that;'
He stamped—with rage I think—but why?
Turned roughly from me, seized his hat,
And slammed the door—and here am I!

JOHN has been dreadful since that day,
Few are the words he speaks, and these
He says in such a settled way
I never can feel quite at ease!
And often, as I work or read,
Or play, or sing, my eyes I raise,
And he drops his—but that indeed
Shows that on me his eyes *did* gaze.
He has no taste for pretty girls,
He is in love with solemn books,
He told me not to cast my pearls
To swine—he does not care for looks!
Then *why* does he look at me? why?—
I think of this so ceaselessly;
I fear some day my tongue will cry,
'Ah, John, why *do* you look at me?'

HE lets me drive or walk each day.
Walking a servant must attend;
And, driving, for a brougham he'll pay,
Or I take airings with a friend.
He's very careful in the choice
Of my associates. Hardly he
Allows me the least bit of voice—
I like him to take care of me!
We go to operas and plays,
To balls and parties, now and then,
But John's forgot his dancing days,
He's never waltzed with me again;
And in the mornings I am good,
I read the books he said were right—
And sometimes they are understood,
And sometimes they confuse me quite.
I practise for two hours a day—
No march or song that fashion brings,
But with approving conscience play
Sonatas and such horrid things.
But ne'er at night he questions me
About the books, as once he would,
Or bid me play a symphony—
So where's the use of being good?

I DROVE to Mudie's, and I brought
A carriage-full of steady books;
'I'll tell him about these,' I thought,
And see how pleased my master looks;
He will not ask me what I do,
So I'll take courage, and *converse;*
I don't talk very well, 'tis true,
But I've known women do it worse.

'O, John!' I cried, 'my studies see—
Science, philosophy—that's best!—
And—what's the horrid word? dear me!—
Theology and all the rest!—
Here's "Ecce Homo"—take a look—
A serious thing, and yet *so* light;
Colenso on the Pentateuch,
A Bishop, John, so he's all right!

"Maurice on Future Punishment"—
That's nice, and proves there's none, you know—
And "Darwin on Development"—
That's charming, and amused me so—
And here's a poem full of force—
Swinburne, a Cambridge man, you see,
That won't be very deep, of course,
But surely deep enough for me!'

John looked a little pale, I thought,
And said, his voice a little low,
'Pray, have you *read* them?'—that I ought
He meant—I bravely answered 'No;
I've only glanced at them as yet,
They're long, you see, and I preferred
To study them and not forget—
I *mean* to read them every word!'

Paper and string he slowly took,
Tied up my books in parcel neat,
Directed them with steady look,
To Mr. Mudie, Oxford Street.
Then rang the bell—the man addrest,
'Take this,' he said, in icy tone,
Drew a deep breath like one opprest,
And cried, 'I'm glad, the poison's gone!'

But when he saw my frightened stare,
He smiled, and all his looks unfroze,
Close to my own he drew his chair,
And said, 'I'll choose your books, dear Rose!"

PART III.

THE senseless sun rose just the same,
Proud to be bright where all is dim,
And set the Eastern sky aflame,
And made the earth look up at him.

The selfish birds sang just as loud,
With rapture in their roundelaye;
And in the streets the foolish crowd
Flock as on any other day.

How could I tell that joy was not?
That death was knocking at the door?
Or that the arrow had been shot
To pierce *my* heart—untouched before?

Or guess whose voice will speak my doom,
Or what the words that must be said,
When I am singing in my room,
And they shall tell me, 'John is dead!'

'He is not dead!' I calmly said,
And stepped into the busy street,
Only my curls upon my head,
And little slippers on my feet.

'He is not dead!' I cried, and walked
  Where streams of eager creatures led;
And when the people stared and talked,
  I smiled, and cried, 'He is not dead!'

Men carry SOMETHING in their arms,
  Some lifeless thing that hangs about;
And mutter words like little charms,
  Reluctant to be spoken out.

They bear that Something 'neath the skies,
  And up the stairs, and to my bed;
And then I stare with helpless eyes,
  And scream, and cry, 'He is not dead!'

Men come and gather round him then,
  To grasp his wrist and feel his head,
And nod, and look at other men,
  Who nod and answer, 'He is dead!'

They try to take me unaware,
  And make me leave him on the bed,
But still I cry—now like a prayer—
  'He is not dead! he is not dead!'

Some one who by the pillow stood
  Made bare his arm and held it so,
Till little drops of ruddy blood
  Fell trickling down so soft and slow.

A tiny stream flows by and by;
  How silent every thing has grown!—

A little breath—a little sigh—
And then a very little moan.

'Life is not quite extinct,' they said;
'God in his mercy may restore:'
And then I shriek, 'He's dead! he's dead!'
And stagger senseless on the floor.

I WAKE and cry, 'I must get up,
John will be coming in to dine!'
Upon my lips they press a cup,
I taste it, drink it—it is wine.
(I think they drugged the draught they ga
To dull the anguish in my breast;
I think 'twas drawn from Lethe's wave
To lull my breaking heart to rest.)

I WAKE again; the dying day
  Makes little spangles on the wall,
And as the spangles twitch away,
  I watch, but cannot think at all.

Why am I here? why have I slept?
  Why am I drest and on a bed?—
Then back the dreadful terror swept,
  Back in one moment,—John is dead!

Along the passages I creep,
  With some strange fancy shaped like this,
Suppose the dead man is asleep
  And I may wake him with a kiss.

Into the chamber where he lay
  I enter like a guilty thing;
With hushing signs they cheer my way
  And point, and make a whispering.

I trace his figure in the bed,
  With lines that do not speak of death;
But, ah, I fear his *face* is dead,
  Its ghastly whiteness stops my breath!

'He lives!' they whisper, 'and may live;'
  They let me kneel beside him there:

And then I pray, and try to give
Some thanks, and make it *like* a pray'r.

I think my life has gone to sleep,
And in a dream I move and act—
Why should I break my heart and weep
For what is not a real fact?

By day and night the feeling stays,
It is a stunned, resistless rest,
It keeps with me through nights and days,
While still he lies in trance opprest.

Is it because his soul is laid
In deepest trance that mine is such?
A strange *rapport* between us made
Because I love so very much?

I know not if 'tis so or not,
I only know 'tis like a dream—
There's nothing that I have forgot,
And nothing like itself doth seem.

They say the child had fallen prone,
He caught it ere the horses slid,
And took the danger for his own;
I but reply, 'Of course he did.'

They say the child's uninjured, or
But lightly touched; at that I stare,
And cry, 'That's what he did it for,
Of course the child's not hurt a hair!'

And still the days and nights pass on,
And suns and moons illume the skies,
And still I sit and watch by John,
And still in quiet trance he lies.

SUDDEN, another epoch springs,
The first has lived its life and goes,
And now he raves of many things,
And who I am he never knows.

O wond'rous arrows (taking flight
From aimless hands), that find a mark,
O words that are so full of light,
Though they are spoken in the dark!

And to myself he talks of me,
And knows not that myself am I!
His sentences set sorrows free,
That spread their little wings and fly.

AGAIN I saw his ghastly eyes,
O they were full of fear and pain,
As beckoning in a secret wise,
He said, 'Hush, hush—don't tell again.'

And there was something awful in
That secret air so wild and weak,
You might have sworn some dreadful sin
Lay deeper than his tongue could speak.

But all the words he ever said
After this mystery was made,
Were, 'Can she love me now I'm dead,
Who when I lived was too afraid?'

And then he cried in wailing tone,
His poor hand making piteous sign,
Four little words—four words alone,
That went straight from his heart to mine.

'She cannot love me!' that was all—
'She cannot love me!' so it ran—
My eyes let tears in rivers fall,
And still I cried, 'She can—she can!'

He loves me—I am sure of it!
And doubts my love—ah! foolish John,

Ah! foolish John, when it is writ
My eyes within—my lips upon.

How can life look a little bright,
Ere death has promised to forget?
How can my cruel heart be light,
When they may snatch him from me yet?

'I'M in Heaven, am I not?
You are an angel with her eyes!
And you've her little dimple got,
That used to gladden and surprise;
'Twas just before she laughed it came,
I've often watched it dimpling in,
Yes—there it is—and quite the same.
I'm glad you've got her pretty chin—
Poor lovely child!—she's dead, you know;
I killed her though I loved her well,
I killed her, I ill-used her so,
I think I'll have to go to hell.'

And then he slept—as if, alas!
The thought of hell could soothe and bless,
And I ran peeping to the glass
My little dimple to caress.

'AH! doctor, he is calmer now,
His pulse is lower, is it not?
The lines are lighter on his brow?
I'm sure his hand is not so hot?

The doctor has a dreadful face,
Its muscles cannot move, I know,
'Tis always calm and full of grace,
And always grave—I hate it so!
And when I say that John seems eased,
And little joyful symptoms tell,
He never is more bright and pleased,
And never says that he'll get well!
If grief shall pass and I could live
A hundred years of happy space,
With every joy that life can give
I'll ne'er forget that doctor's face!

With such a question in my tone
I asked, 'When fever's power is seen
The thoughts they speak are all their own—
They say the very things they mean?'
He rubbed his hands and shook his head,
And murmured (how my hate increased!)
'In fever usually is said
The very things they mean the least!'

HOW many nights I sat and saw
The sun drop lightly from the sky,
And then my heart dropped down with awe,
Is that the way that people die?
As thought with thought became entwined
I scarcely dared to draw my breath,
For still to my affrighted mind
Each summer sunset seemed a death;
And yet to look I had no choice,
So there I sat one evening bright,
When John said in a pleasant voice,
'How red the sunset is to-night!'

A blow was stricken through my brain
That tingled to my finger ends,
The swift delight was like a pain—
So keenly joy with sorrow blends;
And while my every fibre shook,
I said in tone sustained and low—
Like some one reading from a book—
'I never saw a brighter glow.'

And then with manner calm and wise
I held his medicine to his lips,
Looking down deep into his eyes
To see his soul without eclipse.

And there I saw it safe and free,
  Restored to reason's lovely sway—
And that dear soul looked up at me
  With love unfathomed in its ray.

THE doctor comes—I fly to him,
And murmur words so sweet and few—
He peers above his glasses' brim,
And nods, and says, 'Ah-ha, he'll do!'

AH, happy moments, pause and stay,
You surely like to be so fair—
Ah, linger too delightful day
Whose every minute is a prayer!
Why should I live for more than this?
Life can bestow no brighter gem,
Since on his lips I've laid a kiss,
And stolen one away from them!
I'll hardly let him move or speak—
I'm just as stern as I can be—
He is so very wan and weak—
And I'm so gay and strong, you see.

Yet once he said with sad surprise
(So I'm not blooming, I suppose),
'Where did you get those wistful eyes,
And pallid cheeks, poor, pretty Rose?'

I THINK that life's in love with him—
She is so eager to restore,
She will not let his eyes be dim,
Remembering how they shone before—
She's like an artist prone to stand,
Bewitched her fav'rite work above,
Bestowing with delighted hand
The little charms that spring from love;
'Tis sweet to see each tender touch—
Fresh tiny tints and sparkles bright,
While every day he gains so much,
That every day is marked with white.

He laughs, my gay delight to see;
Laughs at my face of cloudless bliss:
And when he laughs it seems to me,
Heaven can have no joy like this!
And in the twilight of the day—
The happy day that promised more—
He held my hands and said his say:
None said so sweet a say before!

I learned how deep his love had been;
Poor love—by folly kept at bay,
And how his heart had crowned me queen:
Poor queen—who flung her crown away.

How wrath and love may be the same,
And wrath be hard and love be shy;
And as I learned I blushed with shame
At such a shallow thing as I!
Dead fell repentance, fear, and strife,
Lost in a heaven of delight—
To be a loved and loving wife:
Measureless rapture—height of height!

O! John, this sick room life is sweet,
Don't get too well as days unfold—
I can't sit smiling at your feet,
When in your bank you count your gold!

HERE comes Sir James—the door-bell rang;
Ah, John, you are not mine alone;
I feel a little jealous pang
That all your words are not my own.

They meet in manner somewhat proud,
Yet hands are grasped with gesture true;
I'm glad that passing thunder-cloud
Has left the sky of friendship blue!

John, leaning in his easy chair,
Looks like a hero in distress—
He has a something in his air
That thrills me with its nobleness.

I never saw a man like John,
Whose every touch can beauty make,
The ground his footstep rests upon
Is dearer for that footstep's sake.

Very tall men are worse than small—
They straggle, and are helpless quite,
Six feet is certainly too tall,
For five feet ten's the perfect height.

As for his nose, I'll never seek
To change the one ordained by fate—
Why should a nose be like a beak?
Sure Grecian statues have theirs straight.

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SIR James smiles on me as he goes,
And says, 'I think the wrong's come right,
For, though your cheek has lost its rose,
I fancy that your heart is light.'
The glance I gave is quenched in tears,
In happy tears that sprang and shone,
I'd not a bit of room for fears,
I was made up of hopes alone!

He cried, 'The fright might frighten some,
I thought that love would win the day;
Be a wise woman—stay at home
And learn your lesson—to obey!'

He went; John's arms are round me now,
The blissful moments speed away,
And with a kiss that seemed a vow,
He murmured, 'We will *both* obey!
For I am thine and thou art mine,
And trust is true and faith is fond.
O fairest face! O face divine!
Beloved a lover's love beyond!'

I was so full of happy care,
And so wrapped up in John, you know,
I had forgotten I was fair,
And wondered when he told me so!

John Jerningham's Journal.

More than a year ago Mrs. Jerningham put forth to the world the experiences of her early married life. Mr. Jerningham also kept a diary; and extracts therefrom are given in the following pages. As they refer to the relations between husband and wife, their mutual action and re-action upon each other, it is believed they will be of interest to the general public—especially to all who have entered into, or are about to enter into, the holy estate of matrimony.

JOHN JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.

PART I.

APLIANT form, a pretty face,
An airy, fairy, laughing thing,
That moved about with careless grace,
Like little bird on active wing—
A sort of human butterfly,
Now going far, now hovering nigh;
Yet still, while flitting here and there
And smiling, nodding, talking fast,
So sweet her smile, so gay her air,
You turned to watch her as she passed;
And watching, found her pleasant look
The fairest page in Nature's book.

John Jerningham, don't be a fool!—
More weighty matters claim your thought,
Attend to business, as you ought!

Confound the thing! Neglect your rule—
To give to work your working hours,
To concentrate your ablest powers
On money, prices, shares, and stocks,—
Because a girl with golden locks
And scarcely yet escaped from school,
Possessed a smiling, pretty face
And moved about with airy grace!

A strong man swimming up the stream
Must strike out bold and never flinch!
No day is this to muse and dream;—
The stoutest dare not give an inch!
For times are hard, and money's tight,
And banks as sure as is our own
Will have a rather stiffish fight—
And which shall stand, or fall, alone?

And we have been most madly sold
By agents of our house, in Spain,
Who, for waste paper, drew our gold,
Unmindful too, of coming strain;

A set of fools, with no more nous
Than he who trumps his partner's ace!—
And yet, forsooth, they have the face
To think them useful to the house!

'Tis sad, indeed, if house depends
Upon short-sighted, stupid friends

For stupid friends hit doubly hard—
They take a fellow off his guard !

In truth, I have enough to do
And where to turn I scarce can tell ;—
Nought but a struggle pulls us through !—
They said her name is Rosa Bell.

No matter, though, whate'er her name,
Or where she goes, or whence she came !

How many a house, that had been thought
As certain as the Three Per Cents,
Has by the sudden blast been caught !
And sore surprise, and sad laments,
And dire distress attend its fall.
Such ruin lays full many low,
Who can't recover from the blow ;
Who rashly, madly, ventured all !

On business men 'tis hard enough,
But they can bear it, so to speak,
They take the smooth and take the rough ;
But oh ! the old, the young, the weak,
My heart is wrung for these !—for these,
Who drain the sorrow to its lees !

'Tis not to them a business strife,
But serious throw for death or life,
And every 'panic' has its share
Of 'dead and wounded,' here or there !

The 'money-market,' 'stocks,' and 'shares,
  And 'steady,' 'falling,' 'strong' or 'weak,'
Ah! who can tell the hopes, the cares
  These simple words to thousands speak!
And so it must be still while gold
To measure wealth its place shall hold.

Why, John, what is the matter, man?—
Give way like this I never can!—
In every place, go where I will
That smiling face pursues me still!

Though many pretty girls I know
There ne'er was one that served me so!
How can it be?—'Tis too absurd!—
I will not bear it on my word!

Come, let us take the thing in hand—
  Let's look the matter in the face,
High time it is to understand
  The bearings of so strange a case!

I meet a little smiling girl,
  In years, indeed, she's but a child,
And might have found a priceless pearl!—
  Such nonsense drives one almost wild!
For truly, I have not much doubt
  This pretty girl's a silly chit;
I should not fail to find it out
  If I could study her a bit.—
When work is slack, and I am free
I'll go again—I'll go and see.

When this rough time is tided o'er
I'll run away from town once more.—
I half engaged, indeed, to spend
My holiday with that old friend,
Where first the pretty girl I met.
Whose pleasant laughter haunts me yet.

THE fear is gone, the pressure past,
And I can freely breathe again
A strain like this, it could not last
Or man could never bear the strain

Well! we, and others, held our own.
By Jove! how near were we let in!
And if the danger had been known
The danger had still greater been.

If we had failed then others fell,
I thought of that and did my best,
And what I did—it answered well
'Tis over now! and I can rest.

A PRIVATE letter. Oh, I see—
Yes I might take my holiday,
There is not much to hinder me ;
And Johnson writes a line to say,
He and his wife expect me down
When I can get away from town.

Ah, I remember !—I had meant
On their kind help to throw myself
When I was, for a time, intent
On studying that little elf
Who in my brains would flit about,
Till weightier matters drove her out.

For my hard work has gained the day ;
And still hard work must be my lot.—
But surely I might get away,
So I will go—why should I not ?

I'll take the Johnsons at their word,
Have country air and exercise ;—
Then I shall see, too, how absurd
It was to let the laughing eyes
And flitting form of that young girl
Put all my senses in a whirl !

Ah! this is good! I draw it in,
A full long breath of pure, fresh air!
To stay in town would be a sin!
Why is not country everywhere?

This pure, fresh air it is so fine,
It brightens cheek, and lip, and eye,
A draught of dear old Nature's wine,
And we can never drain it dry!

A long-drawn breath expands the chest
And makes the freshened pulses beat,
It lulls excited nerves to rest,
And puts a man upon his feet!

Happy the swains with rustic health,
Who care not how the 'stocks' may go,
Rich in their very scorn of wealth!—
But yet, perchance, a little slow!

Oh! if I only had the pow'r
On breezy down, in shady wood,
To spend my every waking hour!—
I really don't believe I should!

For though I'm glad to get away,
With nothing in the world to do.
And find the first a pleasant day,
I weary in a day or two.

I hope they'll send my letters down,
When free from business what is life!
I got the latest news in Town,
And brought some fish for Johnson's wife.

I rise betimes and go downstairs
So light of step, so void of cares,
And hungry too!
A freshness in the country air
Makes farmers relish plainer fare
Than townsfolk do!

Where are the papers? What's the news?
They 'don't see much except Reviews,'
And 'read *them* through'!!
They only have one post a day!—
The office too so far away—
How can they do!

I don't deny your rightful wealth
Is that which keeps a man in health,
Food—corn—and that;
But people surely ought to know
How shares and money-market go,
'Buoyant' or 'flat'!—

Yet, after all, why, what are stocks
When you compare them with the flocks
That graze around?

We cannot live except we eat,
We get our bread, we get our meat
From off the ground.

There's good and ill in every case—
This bracing air at least is charming!—
Johnson is wedded to the place
And prides himself upon his farming.

We took a ramble, looked at stores
Of hay and corn—a pleasant sight,
We passed the morning out of doors
And came in with an appetite.

How tranquil Johnson's daily course!—
Of crops how learnedly he talks!
(I wonder where he bought that horse?)
We have good rides, or famous walks—
Of country air he gets his fill,
And what a breather up that hill!

To him no anxious times, no care,
Nothing to take him unaware,
Nothing to vex him or to worry,
No eager dread, no fear, no flurry!

A country life's the life to live,
And country air the air to give
Muscle and bone!
Our fathers may have thought of this —
The country would not be amiss
Ere Town was known!

If our whole island were a town,
Old England's glory would come down,
  For pluck and strength
Want early hours, and wholesome air,
And simple, good, substantial fare,
  Or fail at length!

I FIND it getting rather slow,—
I thought it would be when I came!
Town has so much that's fresh to show.
But here—'tis day by day the same!

Well, it is wonderful and strange
In country life, what people see!
I cannot do without a change,
The City is the place for me.

Now, as you walk along a street
There's always something new to meet;
But here it is so blank and tame,
The wood, the river—just the same!

The same high hills, the same low meads!
A shift of wind becomes a boon.—
Yet Johnson likes the life he leads!
'Twould settle me—and pretty soon!

But here to find some change one tries—
'Tis hot or cold, or dry or wet;
And in the morn the sun must rise,
And in the evening he must set;

And if he sets in glorious hues
Fair weather we may hope to see,

And this, alas ! is all the news—
If news it is—that reaches me !

One never knows the time of day,
Or where to go or what to do,
The hours pass wearily away—
Which early train will take me 'through' ?

AH, I have seen sweet Rosa Bell!
And now I know
What charmed me so,
What forms her witchery,—her spell!
'Tis not the dazzling pink and white,
Nor sparkling eyes, nor golden hair;—
And though a merry, dancing sprite,
Kittens would meet and beat her there!
But she is very fair to view—
Like Mother Eve when worlds were new—
Fair by the light of inner grace
Reflected in her changeful face;
The heaven within her upraised eye,
The sudden look of sweet surprise
To master that which passes by,
And all the love that dormant lies;
For she is but an opening flower!—
She's on the threshold of her life!—
And she will be a noble dower
To him who takes the girl to wife.

All that is sweet, and good, and fair,
Are folded in and nestled there,
And ask but time, and warmth, and space,
To open out in fullest grace

Of 'perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command!'

She met us, and she stopped to talk;
  And, strange enough! remembered me;—
And hoped I'd had a pleasant walk,
  And said she was quite glad to see
I had escaped again from Town.—
But this, of course, I must put down
To mere politeness, for we say
As much as this is every day.—
She looked as if she meant it, though,
And gave a beaming smile, I know.

I'm glad I've seen her once again,
  For now I understand the charm
That kept her image in my brain,
  And filled me with a strange alarm.—
'Tis that her beauty, barely ripe,
Made her stand forward as the type
Of what is sweet, and fair, and good,
In early opening womanhood.

She makes me think of Joan of Arc
  And fair Godiva, both in one!—
Grace Darling, in her fragile bark,
  Did but what this fair girl had done
Had she belonged to such a grade—
And been, too, somewhat stouter made!

Are there not strange affinities
  That permeate all time and space?

Some, in the old divinities
  Embodiment of them can trace.—

'Tis said that Nature makes a pair,
And two-fold life is everywhere.—
Where dwells the one who could to me
A sort of second-being be?

A dinner-party, what a bore!
  Now Johnson might have spared me that!
And I have told him o'er and o'er
  I much prefer a quiet chat!

I can't escape, at any rate;—
  I should have got away, indeed
But did not know until too late!—
  Nor can I an engagement plead!

I scarcely yet had ceased to fume,
  But smoothed my brow, and calmed my air,
And having reached the drawing-room,
Found—Rosa, and her father, there.

And me to him they introduce,
  I hear they call him Major Bell,—
A tall, old man, both neat and spruce—
  A sort of antiquated swell.

He had not much, indeed, to say,
  Answered with yeses and with noes,
And so I quickly got away
  And went and stood by little Rose.

And little Rose looks up and smiles,
  And seems to brighten when I come !—
Is she a witch with artful wiles ?—
  What can have made me almost dumb ?

And yet it would be well to speak,
  To utter something smart and gay,
And bring the dimple to her cheek—
  But all my words had fled away !

The dinner—like too many such,
  You had not room to move your arms,
Your neighbour you must almost touch—
  For me these crowds possess no charms.

Some that give dinners seem to think,
  More than the tables fairly seat
Will fill up pleasure to the brink !—
  Their own good wishes they defeat.

Crowds at a race are very well,
  But not at dinner, or at ball.—
A married man took Rosa Bell,
  And I—took no one in at all.

THEY played at croquet on the lawn—
I stopped a while to watch the game,
I thought it very poor and tame,
And turned to leave them, with a yawn !—
But Rosa Bell then stood by me,
And chattered gaily as she stood ;
Before she went I got to see
A game at croquet might be good !
She asked me if I did not play,
And volunteered the rules to teach ;
But I replied, I could not stay,
Which surely was a stupid speech ;—
Especially as I remained
Upon the ground at least an hour !—
I felt my footsteps were restrained
By some unknown, resistless power !

I watched her play—she played it well,
And knocked the painted balls about,
Her eyes were bright
With true delight
When to her some advantage fell ;
She gave a merry little shout
At putting others to the rout !—
When she was 'home' and once more free
She came again and talked to me.

I liked the laughter in her eyes,
I liked the glow of exercise
Upon her cheek; and, as she play'd
Her feet a pretty picture made,
They are such dainty, tripping feet!—
  But language there has made a slip,
  For feet like hers would never *trip*,
They're far too clever, and too neat!

HER beauty comes out very well
When you can catch it in repose
At church we fronted Major Bell,—
And next to him, his daughter, Rose.

As on her cheek the lashes rest,
I think I like that style the best;
But when I see her earnest eyes
In them a heaven of beauty lies!
So pure are they 'that from their ray
Dark Vice would turn abashed away.'

I almost thought to-day to trace
A sort of young-Madonna face!
All undeveloped, giving scope
For much of fancy, as of hope,
Dependent for its fashioning
On what the coming years may bring.

AN Archery-meeting; would I go?
I would.—It is a fine old sport—
You think of Robin Hood, you know,
And William Tell—and all, in short,
Who drew, without a miss or flaw,
A longer bow than now we draw.

Toxopholites degenerate
To me they seemed, that merry band;
They mostly were effeminate,
And did not strive to understand.

I could not praise their skill at all,
Scarce one among them aimed to touch;
The shafts at random seemed to fall—
The bull's-eye did not suffer much!

The girls, though, made a pleasant chatter,
And wore a pretty dress of green;
They thought their failure did not matter—
And that fair creature was their queen.

The arrows wildly went astray,
And some fell wide and some fell short;—
It is not mastered in a day,
This fine, old, noble English sport!

They could not hit the centre blot
With careless aim and idle hands;—
And Johnson says the safest spot
Is always—where the target stands.

The shooting was absurdly bad—
I rather liked their fancy dress—
And they were all as gay and glad
As if it were a great success!

So, on the whole, I don't repine
At having gone—it was as well—
'Twas all that offered—and—in fine,
I saw again fair Rosa Bell.

And when that pretty maid I see
In drawing-room, or field, or wood,
She talks most pleasantly to me—
For which I think her very good.

She talks to me—yes, that's the fact—
My speech her presence drives away—
With strange stupidity attacked
I cannot find a word to say!

But she likes well enough to chat.—
Why, John, what can you be about,
To let a little girl like that
Put all your senses to the rout!

THE pleasant days will hurry on;
Why can't we make the moment stay?
And I, alas! must soon be gone—
How quickly comes that wretched day!

It is not good to dwell alone—
So God, who did our nature plan,
To whom our every want is known,
Said of the first, the new-made man.

The lions pair, the eagles mate,
The birds build nests in hedge and tree—
'Tis vain to fight against one's fate!—
I wonder if she'd marry me?

I do not know which way to ask,
I have no notion how to woo;
It cannot be a pleasant task—
But others manage to get through.

Oh, she is very beautiful!
Would I could call her all my own!
A loving wife, and dutiful!—
I cannot bear to live alone!

I'm fairly caught!—I cannot tell
How much I love this pretty Rose!

My hopes I quell, and ring their knell,
Unless I venture to propose!

'Love when 'tis true needs not the aid
Of sigh nor oaths to make it known;
And, to convince the cruel'st maid
Lovers should use their love alone.'

So Sedley says.—If this is all
Love, of himself, must make it plain.—
How will the time of parting fall?—
And shall I ever come again?

Oh, for some happy hour and chance
To tell her all that's in my mind,
Some lonely walk, some rustic dance!—
I think she would not prove unkind!

THE thing is over, it is done!
I've staked the stake—but have I won?—
I have not spoken as I meant,
In sooth, I am but half content
I could not all my passion tell,
For I proposed to—Major Bell
It happened we were left alone,
I thought the Major sounded me;
I therefore made my wishes known,
And now await my destiny!—
Her father took my offer well;
Of course, 'twas not for him to tell
How she might feel; but in his air
Was something to forbid despair.—
He must have meant me to propose,—
But what about dear little Rose?

He was too smooth and too polite—
I like a fellow out-of-hand!
I fear I have not acted right,
To speak to one so smooth and bland—
But it is over!—nor to-day
Can I see Rose, for she's away;
To-morrow morning I must go,
The Major says, my fate to know.

Oh! Time, how senseless is the one
  Who represents you taking flight!
For me you neither fly nor run,
  You lamely limp along to-night!—
How can I sleep, how can I rest
With all this anxious doubt oppressed?—
For if she should not smile on me—
  She always smiles, meet when we may—
Let this a happy omen be!—
  My ecstasy I cannot say,
If she, my tender little dove,
Accepts, and can return my love!

SHE is so fair, so sweet, so good,
And I—as happy as a boy!
I have been running in the wood,
I climbed a tree for very joy!

I shouted till the woods replied,
I shouted then at their reply;
I could have halloo'd till I died,
For who so gay, so glad as I!—

I've said at last what was to say,
And now I hold the darling's word!
Oh! quickly dawn thou brightest day
That brings me home my little bird!—

I found her looking very sweet,
And half in blushes, half in tears,
As if afraid my love to meet—
And so I strove to calm her fears;

And told what she already knew,
And waited till she answered me;—
But when they came her words were few,
And checked by maiden modesty.

I liked her better in this guise
Than had she smiled as first she did;

I sought to see her angel eyes,
  But they were veiled by downcast lid.

A sweeter Rose is this than she
  Of whom we read—the Gardener's daught
Whom Juliet sent the man to see—
  And he no sooner saw than sought her.

Johnson declares he's very glad,
  And Johnson's wife looked pleased and sly
They'd surely set me down for mad
  If they but knew how pleased am I!

I feel my happy heart expand,
  My sympathies go out to all!—
There's not a being in the land
  But I could now a brother call!

For she is mine! Dear, blushing Rose,
  That scarcely could her answer give!—
And mine the earnest hope, God knows,
  To guard this treasure while I live!

I'M back at work—again in Town,
How different my coming life!
I little thought, when I went down,
To look about and get a wife.

Of changes time is very full—
How seldom can we much foresee—
Whilst by his horns I took the bull,
Upon his horns the bull took me!

Are there not hidden mysteries
Our foresight mocking, and our sense?
How frequent are the histories
Where seeming chance is Providence!

Oh! it is very sweet to own
I live not in myself alone!—
Her happy life is wrapped in mine,
And pulse for pulse and breath for breath,
So close shall love our lives entwine
We two are only one till death!—
And after death 'tis ours to be
Together in Eternity.

Her face no longer haunts me here,
With mocking smiles for ever near,

Or peeps from unexpected nooks
When I am busy with my books.
Down in my heart of hearts she lives,
And cheery warmth and strength she gives!
For all my being is astir
With thoughts and hopes that spring from her!

The rapture of the parting kiss!—
I held her to my throbbing heart,
And took that sweet foretaste of bliss!—
It made it worth the while to part.

But lovers who must part for years,
Who go across the dreary seas,
What anguish in their falling tears!—
Ah! from my soul I pity these.

They part, and dare not hope to meet,
Or hope, and find their hope in vain;—
No joy for them, the woe to cheat,
No pleasure to outweigh the pain!

I had, before I came away,
An interview with Major Bell;
He seemed to have a hand to play—
I do not like him over well.

In open field you have the right
To make good running when you can;
The Major's grasp is very tight—
Poor chances for a weakly man!—

Unlike her father, darling Rose!
Her generous nature is her own;
Her every look and word disclose
No guile, no art, to her is known!—

Like parent stem becomes the flower,
Sparrow like sparrow seems to be,
But man receives a richer dower
In infinite variety.

How seldom find we form and face
Another face and form repeat!—
I love the difference to trace
When passing through the crowded street;

And every differing face and form
Its differing life and nature bears;—
Knew we the laws, no sudden storm
In man would take us unawares.

Oh! quickly dawn thou happy day
When I shall call this angel, wife!
With her my own, come then what may,
There must be sunshine in my life!

I have a cosy little nest
Fit for my bird, my sweetest Rose;—
I think the people did their best
Its pretty fittings to dispose.

I knew not half so much before
Of carpets, curtains, poles, and rings;—

I used to deem it once a bore
To hear about such trivial things.

But now—for Rose—no pains too great,
No cares too small that give her pleasure!—
I like to stand and contemplate
This casket for my valued treasure.

Oh! happy day, come soon, come soon,
When darling Rosa will be mine!—
I'm longing for the honeymoon!
I mean to take her up the Rhine.

'All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love
And feed this sacred flame.'

And high, indeed, this flame will mount,
And scatter brightness on the way,
When I have nothing more to count
To reach my wedding-day!

I weary of that wretched train!
So many journeys to and fro!
Always to go and come again!—
The very porters seem to know!

And now, whenever I run down,
So fully is she occupied
With mantle, bonnet, skirt or gown,
That I am almost thrust aside!

But should not holy marriage be
A greater thought than handsome dress!—
These trifles hold her back from me—
They seem to make her love me less.

I envy flounce and furbelow,
And trimming, veils, and gloves, and lace;—
They occupy her more, I trow,
Than can be good in such a case.

When Adam woke and saw his Eve,
And loved his helpmeet, pure and fair,
No fuss like this arose to grieve
And come between the happy pair!

But now the wedding—which we know
As life-long tie of heart to heart
Has dress, and gaiety, and show
To constitute its chiefest part!

No matter; it will bring about
A time that can for all atone;
For when the wedding-bells ring out,
I speed away—and not alone!

I took her down a pretty set
Of pearls, for my pure pearl to wear—
I think I see her smiling yet!—
I hope they'll suit a girl so fair.

On them she looked with loving eyes,
Delighted was she with my choice,

And me she kissed in glad surprise!—
It made my inmost heart rejoice!

The day at last is drawing near,
The day for which I long have sighed;
I pant with joy, I pant with fear—
I go to claim my lovely bride!

PART II.

BOUND by the tie of man and wife—
Whatever troubles may befall—
'Tis ours to know that fullest life
Where each to each is all in all.—
My darling Rose, my gentle dove,
I cannot tell my happiness
In knowing I have gained thy love;
Nor all my gratitude express
To think that I am one with thee—
That through the change of coming years
We two are one—and cannot be
Alone again in hopes or fears!
And may we, as we forward go
Together, and together still,
The holiest, purest pleasure know,
The brightest phase of life fulfil!

Again I see my blushing bride
Before the altar, at my side;
Her gentle air, her timid look,
When I her tender finger took
And placed the ring! I gave my troth
To love and cherish her till death,

And she pledged hers; and there to both
The priest our several duties read.—
I did not freely draw my breath
Till it was done, and we were wed!

For I had felt it far too dear,
Too sweet a draught for me to sip,
Thought some ill fate would interfere
And snatch the cup when at my lip;—
Nor could I drive away this dread
Till she was mine, and fairly wed!

The wedding guests, the bridesmaids there,
That seemed our happiness to share,
They fluttered round her, and she stood
A Queen amid the graceful throng,
A thousand times more choice and good
Than any maiden sung in song!
A pretty scene!—A happy day,
Which still to happier days led on!—
But I was glad to get away
And with my darling wife be gone.

MY wife's remarks are very droll,--
And then, the questions that she asks!
Are they from ignorance?--or soul,
And genius?—*That* has many masks!

It strikes me she is little taught—
No matter, she is very sweet;
'Twas not a learned wife I sought,
Love will all other teachers beat.

I could not have a happier task
Than her light studies to direct,—
To every question she can ask
A ready answer she'll expect!

Her mind is like an opening flower,
And I shall be the Zephyr bland,
To breathe thereon with quickening power,
And make the tender leaves expand.

And she will catch the hue, the tone,
That ever nearest she shall find,
And thus become still more my own,
For we shall be but one in mind!

A growing fear possesses me,
An anxious thought distresses me!—

'Tis but a look, a tone, an air,
And yet I wonder what is there!—
Is it a cloud that's creeping up?
A dash of bitter in the cup?
The 'little rift within the lute?'
The 'pitted speck in garnered fruit?'
Yet if I ask me what? or why?
No ready words give quick reply.—

'Tis vague alarm, 'tis coward fear;
It will not open summons hear,
But hiding, slyly throws a dart
With careful aim at tender part.

A kind of want, a sort of care
Will hang about her unaware—
As though her inner being pined
For some great good it fails to find!—
A little matter, very slight,
  I cannot grasp it, though I see.—
It floats about, it hides the light,
  It makes some moments dull to me!

Would I possessed a potent charm!—
But is she ill?—a new alarm!—
I questioned her, she hung her head;
She only wanted change, she said.
If this the wrong, we must away!—
Back came her smiles, and she was gay.

She wanted change! With change oppressed,
I should have thought she wanted rest!
And so I hastily took fright
At what a journey will put right!

My little wife is singing gaily;
She loves to sing, and laugh, and chatter;
We move about, we're moving daily,
And there is nothing now the matter.

And she is charmed with all she sees,
And everything to her is new,
The merest trifles serve to please,
The child exclaims at every view!

And many a question puts to me,
And mine is all her strange delight!—
It is a something grand to see
A little wife so glad and bright!

And still how readily she'll look
For information and for news,
As if I were a clever book
Which she delighted to peruse!

And her intelligence is great!—
The richest ground, though lying fallow!—
I wonder by what freak of fate
Her learning chanced to be so shallow?

But though she's quick, and sweet and fair
The charm of charms—all else above—
It fills my heart, it revels there—
That I possess her fullest love!

That all her being turns to mine;
That growing liker, side by side,
We shall together, cloud or shine,
'From happy years to happier glide.'

Now comes another little fear
To enter in and nestle here,
But I, without the least delay,
Drive this ill-favoured sprite away.—
I would not have the slightest slur,
The slightest censure, passed on her!

I do not want her like a prude!—
Why will this whispering fear intrude?
I might be rather glad to see
Her manner just a shade less free.—

Not that she means to be too bold,
No, Rosa free from blame I hold!
It is the present style and tone,—
I do not think it good, I own.

My mother, now—those times are past,
Manners and fashions will not last,
Girls have become a little fast!
To copy mothers would be slow!

Still there are things should never go;
And womanly reserve—the nice
And ready instinct, thwarting vice—
Is one of them. I love to see
The outworks held by modesty;
The quick alarm that seems to tell
You cannot storm the citadel!

I do not blame my dearest Rose,
It is the way the fashion goes,
And against fashion how convince?
But I confess it makes me wince
To see my wife so freely chat
With strangers at hotels, and that.—
That Frenchman, first, on board the boat—
But he is only one to quote—
It was presuming when the man
At once to talk to Rose began!
She should have known the proper way
To keep such insolence at bay!
She might have checked him with a look,
And quietly have been polite;
She laughed at his mistakes, and took
The greatest pains to put him right!
And seemed about as pleased as he,
And was, I thought, almost too free!

I do not wish my wife to fetter,
But more reserve would please me better,

If she were less accessible,
Her spirits more repressible,
A something there, a sort of grace,
To make all people know their place!

She's so attractive, and so fair,
Men turn to watch her everywhere,—
And she is pleased because they stare!
Were I a woman, now, I think
From such attention I should shrink.

She means no harm, but, to my taste,
This confidence is much misplaced.
The code she goes by seems to be—
With men be at your ease, and free;
Love where you love, and treat the others
As if they were your friends and brothers!

AT home!—A very charming word
Has home become to me,
So sweet, its like was never heard
In days of liberty.

There's one to watch my coming home,
To meet me with a smile;
In truth, I have no need to roam
My leisure to beguile.

But breakfast over, I'm away,
And only back to dine.—
I wonder how she spends the day,
To what her tastes incline?

I almost envy her, indeed,—
So much as she might do!—
There are so many things to read,
I scarce can look them through.

But I my duty must not shirk
Nor do my duty ill,
For now I've double cause to work,
And work with double will.

To have a second life that lives
For you, and you alone,

Repeats your pleasures, and it gives
A greater of its own !—

I do believe Rose scarcely reads
A Paper or Review ;
She'd rather work a mat with beads
Than look a column through ;

She'd rather play a silly dance
That has so little in it,
Than give to matters of finance,
Or politics, a minute !—

Well, never mind, she's very sweet
And very dear to me !
I love to watch her, bright, and neat,
At dinner and at tea.

And when she pours me out my tea,
The tea it is so good !—
It never was like this to me
In days of bach'lorhood !

I often take another cup,
To have her pour it out,
And sip, and drink it slowly up,
And keep the things about.—

And when I have to say good-bye,
I tear myself away.—
My business over, back I fly,
Without the least delay !

MY wife's first ball to-morrow night,
And she is wild with gay delight,
And occupied about her dress,
Which she would have a grand success!—
I hope my friends will take to her—
But that they cannot fail to do—
That she's most winning, I aver,
And then she is so pretty too!

I must not have her dance too much,
I cannot let her waltz at all.
I ventured on my views to touch
When we were talking of the ball.—
Though some may say I'm too precise,
I have the right to draw a line;—
I do not think round dances nice—
At least for Rosa, now she's mine.

THE ball is over! Would to Heaven
I had not taken Rosa there!
This horrid pain so roughly given,
And not one jot she seems to care!

Before she went her evening dress
Annoyed me—cut by far too low,
I strove to make the evil less,—
Without a scarf she should not go!

And she was almost in a passion,
She did not like to put it on,—
But this is not a point of fashion,—
She took it off when I was gone!

Now Lady Græme is most refined,
Such dressing would her taste offend,
And I had always set my mind
On having her for Rosa's friend.

I felt inclined to stop away—
And now I truly wish we had!
But Rosa counted on the day,—
I did not like to make her sad.

Beside, I never should have guessed
She can't be trusted out of sight!—

I am astonished and distressed
  At learning what I learned to-night!

I played a rubber, and returned
  To find her—whirling in a waltz!
And all my wishes coldly spurned,
  And all her promises made false!

How dared she! With her smiling face
  Close to the man's! her shoulders bare!—
He clasped her in the giddy race,
  His whiskers almost touched her hair!

I could have dashed amid the crowd
  To tear her from his circling arm!
I checked myself—I felt too proud
  To make a scene—to cause alarm.

I brought her home without delay,
  My rage I hardly could conceal,
I think she pleaded still to stay,—
  Nor seemed the least remorse to feel.

My thoughts on deep upbraidings ran,—
  But I suppressed them when I spoke;
She answered lightly—as she can—
  She seemed to think it all a joke.

That I had told her not to waltz
  She half denied—or did not care—
But this pretence was weak and false,—
  She coolly set about her hair.—

I never felt more deeply hurt!—
My wishes trampled in the dust!—
In power of vain and giddy flirt
It is not wise one's peace to trust!

I've taken measures to prevent
Recurrence of this dreadful pain—
She shall have leisure to repent
Before she goes to balls again!

For then and there did I decline
The invitations for each ball—
If she regards no wish of mine
I will not take her out at all;

So, at her desk I sat me down
And wrote replies, constrained and glum,
To Lady Vaux, and half the Town,
Declaring that we could not come.

I rang the bell, the letters sent
For posting in the nearest box.—
And then I told her what I meant—
That notes despatched to Lady Vaux,

And Mrs. Payne, and Colonel Vane
From those engagements set us free.—
Nor will I take her out again
Till she has learned to study me!

AT breakfast time she gave my cup
With stiff politeness; had she shown
The least desire to make it up
I should have yielded, I must own.—
I waited till the hour was past,
And went unreconciled at last!

I strove to-night to break the ice
By asking how the day was spent.
Her answers were not free nor nice,—
I wholly failed in my intent.—
She did not read, she did not play,
For what she *did* I'm at a loss.—
She did not, surely, fret all day
Because I scolded and was cross?

My interference she resented—
That I had spoken I repented—
I could not bear her altered look,
And turned for refuge to a book.

I long to snatch her to my heart
And kiss to smiles that ugly frown,
But while she plays this injured part
She would but coolly put me down.—

And I am sorry now I wrote
  Those notes so hastily last night.—
  Her look of sorrow and affright
When she was told—my heart it smote,
And haunts me still !—'Tis past recall—
  Well, I must ask her pardon there ;
I'll take her to some other ball
  If the round dances she'll forswear.

ANOTHER day has passed away
And still this distance and this gloom!
Where is the creature, bright, and gay,
That gave a charm to every room?—
She meets me with a cool good-morrow,
Politely formal at each meal,
Shows more of anger than of sorrow—
She cannot guess at what I feel!
No loving tone, or look, or kiss,
How can I live a life like this!
And live it why?—Because she did
The only thing I had forbid,
And took to sulking when I chid!

'TIS very hard to be at strife
With one we love! Each word unkind
Cuts to the heart like cruel knife,
And rankles after in the mind.

And where we blame, and still love on,
And cannot all the blame forget,
Our anger shall not soon be gone,
Two-edg'd it is, and doubly whet;

For we are angered first at wrong
Borne by ourselves, then far above
This anger, other, lasting long,
For fault abiding where we love.

CAN she be made of flesh and blood
And bear on terms like these to live?
The tranquil beast that chews the cud
Could not a calmer picture give;
Except that I at times have thought
She seems afraid to meet my eye,
And looks as if she had been caught
In something wrong or something sly!

Oh! Rosa, let me still be sure
That no deceit can ever dwell
Within that breast I thought so pure!
For thee to doubt, would faith expel,
And I should know not where to cast
An anchor in the whelming blast!

Another day shall not pass by
Till I have spoken out my mind!
Rosa may sulk, or she may cry,
Or call me cruel and unkind;
I will not have our wedded life
Embittered by this hateful strife,
I'll take to task my little wife!—
I'll show her what her duties are,
And where she fails, and I am pained.

Her life and mine she shall not mar
By false resentment, overstrained.—
The right she must be made to see,
And she will surely yield to me.

SHE does not love me! Oh, the pang,
The thrilling anguish of that thought!
Envenomed bite of deadly fang!—
It is with madness fraught!

I spoke to her.—I would not let
Our mutual life drag on in pain!
A word to her I hoped would set
The matter right—make peace again.

I deemed it but a lingering haze
That hung between, and hid the light—
This blown away, our future days
Would, like our former ones, be bright.

I talked to her of love and truth,
Of patience and forbearance too—
I said her ignorance—her youth,
Should yield to one who better knew.

I tried to paint the happy life
That could be led alone by those
Who, in the tie of man and wife,
Considered duties that arose.—

She answered like a silly child,
Trying to make a childish joke;

At this I felt provoked and wild—
It was with purpose that I spoke.

But suddenly there came the thought
She does not love me, for she knows
No sympathy with me!—I sought
To prove me wrong, and questioned Rose.—

For if she loved me, soon or late
Would all come right, no matter when,
Thirsting at once to know my fate,
I asked her if she loved me then.—

And did she love me?—No reply!—
Sharp answers stab! hard words may kill!
But *silence* to *this* question!—Why,
It is intensity of ill!

To be my wife she would not come
Without some answering love for me?
The stilly silence struck me dumb,
I could not fail its drift to see!

And did she dare the future stake,
Unloving come to share my life,
And calmly, coldly undertake
The holy duties of a wife!

Then as the truth shone boldly out
On other wrong its light it threw,
Her father brought the thing about!
And was not I imprudent too?

For charmed by figure and by face
I read therein the good I wanted,
Caught by her witchery and grace,
Her love I almost took for granted.

But now I understand!—Poor Rose,
From blame her weakness is not free!—
The best perchance, among her beaux,
Her father *made her* marry me.

We boast our daughters have a choice,
Yet many a daughter is but sold,
And seems to give consenting voice,—
The greatest cheat performed for gold!

I've met with marrying mammas,
Their clever plotting have detected;
Match-making schemes among papas,
This heartless work I ne'er suspected!

The want that struck me, this explains—
She sees her future cold and blank;
Wives without love are slaves in chains,
And husbands hear the fetters clank?

HOW could I wed a giddy wife
Whose tastes must ever clash with mine!
And cast my happiness for life
An offering at her beauty's shrine!

I cannot such disgrace endure
As that she made me bear last night;
I scarcely even feel secure,
With her behavior free and light!

We went to dine at Lady Græme's—
My wife appears a finished flirt!
Her conduct greatly shocked Sir James,
I felt provoked with her—and hurt!

At dinner, at Sir James's side,
She took her post as honored bride,
And filled it with a pretty grace,
A sweet bewilderment of face.—
But after in the drawing room,
Resolved was she to make display!
I know not how she could presume
To act in that outrageous way,
And with loud merriment to be
To all around her gay and free!—

A knot of men beside her chair
  Assembled, first, to joke and laugh,
Which she approved, with lively air,
  And joined them in their fun and chaff!
I talked apart with Lady Græme,
But there the boisterous laughter came.
It made me feel ashamed and vexed!—
But scarce prepared for what was next!
For then, a tall and languid swell
  With easy carelessness advanced—
He seemed to know her passing well!—
  It was the man with whom she danced!
Upon her easy-chair he leant,
  And spoke to her in lowered tone
With cool effrontery—as bent
  To make her his acquaintance own.
She raised her eyes as if to speak,
With mantling blushes on her cheek.
I caught Sir James's wondering look,
And other people notice took.—
Then she became confused, and shy,
  Got up—to move away, I thought,—
Sat down again without reply,—
  And what it meant in vain I sought!—
I wonder what he could have said
To make her blush so deep a red!
But she recovered from her fright,
  And whispered answers back to him—

Perchance some nonsense, gay and light—
He took advantage of her whim,
And there beside her down he sat
For a long, confidential chat,
And so engrossed and pleased are they,
'A pair of lovers' one would say!

It seems her great delight to be
Agreeable to all around,
And none so bold, and none so free,
But she can meet them on their ground!—
How dare she in this way behave,
Dishonoring the name I gave!
And drawing all regards upon her
As if she gloried in dishonor!
We said good night to Lady Græme
And then, together, home we came.
Home! Is it any home to me,
Or is there any hope in life,
When all my happiness I see
Intrusted to a flirting wife?

I did not speak as back we drove,
I could not trust myself to speak,
My anger for the mastery strove
At thought of her immodest freak.—
Yet with my passions in a stir
I sought to make excuse for her.

She is but young, she does not know
How quick the world will ill impute;

My duty it should be to show,
And save her from this bitter fruit.
If she could love me more discreet
That love would make her.—Ah! to meet
This fond assurance in her eyes,
And find her henceforth good and wise!

I grieve that we are kept apart!—
I longed to take her to my heart!
My just vexation I repressed—
No evil thought had she in mind,
Her childish giddiness transgressed—
I struggle to be calm and kind.

I found her in her dressing-gown—
With all her golden hair let down,
And watched her while she brushed her hair,
And wished she was as good as fair!

I asked her if she ever thinks—
From serious questions Rosa shrinks,
And the more earnest I may be
The more ridiculous is she—
She 'thought she'd liked to give a ball,
And 'not to be reproved at all.'

I was determined, and I spoke
Of all the cares and hopes of life,
And would not let a silly joke
Prevent my duty to my wife;

But all across the grain it went,
For still on mocking was she bent,
And said, with saucy-glancing eyes,
She'd rather far be fair than wise!
And begged while young to be but gay,
And like a merry kitten play.—
Her mockery some time I stood
And tried to speak to her for good;
But she, with answers vain and light,
And still disposed to play the fool,
My rallied patience put to flight,
And I was neither kind nor cool!
I thought of all the galling shame
That she so lately made me bear—
I thought of my long-honored name—
And of the friends that saw her there,
And passed her conduct in review—
And as I thought my anger grew!
Then I declared she should not be
With any man or men so free;
Betraying all my holy trust,
Forgetful of her marriage vow,
Trailing my honor in the dust,
And bringing shame upon her brow!—
Why did she blush, that man to meet?
I asked. How did she dare to flirt?—
With levity she strove to treat
The matter, giving answer pert.
But I insisted on reply—
Without reply I would not go,

And though she then began to cry,
  Where she had met that man I'd know!
I said she should not pass the door
  Till she had answered me, and told
Where she had met that man before!
  At length when she had grown less bold—
She 'met him at Sir James's ball,'—
  Of course, she did!—'Where else, beside?'—
  She did not know.—'Where else?' I cried.
And then, 'Ah! nowhere else at all.'—
She did not tell the truth, I know!
  I said, 'You've told a lie, I fear!'—
  I waited not excuse to hear!—
From bad to worse thus matters go—
My anger great!—And wider grows
The breach I vainly sought to close!

PART III.

AWAY! away!—across the sea!
Away, alone!—pursued by Care!
Away from home, if home it be!—
Far, far away!—no matter where!

To find our idols made of clay!
To find our fondest hopes deceived!—
She, whom I thought as clear as day!
She, whom I trusted and believed!

How could I love so frail a thing!
How could I see great promise there!—
The more the hope the sharper sting
If hope gives place to blank despair!

One wretched day when I returned
That Captain by her side I found!
My righteous anger fiercely burned!
I could have struck him to the ground!

He had presumed to call on her,
And she received him, though alone,—
I vainly hoped she would defer
To me; although my wish was known.

Her hair was hanging all astray—
She made excuse, she 'was asleep'—
I see her as I saw that day!—
I scarcely could my temper keep!

I said, 'There must be some mistake'—
I strove to seem polite and cool—
'Calls gentlemen did never make
When I was out'—for such our rule.

Fitz-Maurice tried to talk, I know,
I did not heed him, what he meant—
I'd have no words—I bade him go—
I showed the door, and then he went.

He went!—and there my erring wife
Confessed the many wrongs she'd done.—
That was the moment in my life
That had not either hope or sun!

For, so her revelations ran,
Not only had she let him call,
But had been flirting with this man
Since she first met him at the ball.—

She said, she wandered out alone
The day that followed on that dance,
Of indoor life so weary grown—
And she had met him there by chance;

Had met him in a public walk
Where she had unattended gone;

Had let him stay with her and talk—
And so her dreadful tale went on.

She found her lonely hours were dull—
Was glad when he had called before—
Some tempting pleasure sought to cull—
And met him still, outside the door.

At home, alone, she could not stay,
With nothing that she liked to do—
Not only did she disobey,
But she had uttered falsehood too;—

Had lied to me from fear, she said,
Had tried before to tell the truth—
She did not like the days she led,
She wanted pleasure in her youth;

And must gad out, and flirt, and chat—
Such was her happiness in life!—
My heart stopped beating!—Then, was that
The woman I had made my wife!

Was that my beautiful ideal
Whom I had worshipped, loved, believed!
And was there nothing true or real,—
Was all my trusting love deceived!

My blood surged back!—In rage and pain
Some hurried, angry words I spoke;
Said, I could ne'er believe again,
Or trust her—and away I broke.

With bitter thoughts I paced my room!
I knew not how the hours went past,
Till in the midst of darkest gloom
One brighter gleam broke in at last.

I would away!—When far from her
I might again be strong and brave!—
At once I acted on the spur
This sudden resolution gave.

Our house had ill accounts received
From Spain, and some one needs must go—
I'd take the duty!—I believed
It would divert me from my woe.

To office, therefore, down I went
And said that I would go to Spain—
And all the day attention lent
While this affair was put in train.

All the long day, through business hours,
I recognized a two-fold mind,
The one exerting usual pow'rs
The other holding back behind,

About that dreadful tale to lurk!—
Like watch on rescued body found
Which, sympathetic, stopped its work
And marks the time the man was drowned.

So it had stopped, stopped at the minute
When she her revelation made,

And blankly viewed the horrors in it,
Nor saw a chance of coming aid.—

I felt that I could cry aloud,
Could shout till all the city heard;
That I could tell the startled crowd
There was no faith in human word!

No trust in oath, in holiest bond,
No surety anywhere on earth!—
That they must look this world beyond
For truth and honor, faith and worth!—

And still the busy day sped on,
And still I did my duty there,
And wished the weary hours were gone
That I might give me to despair!—

My hope is lost, my life is wrecked!—
I strike upon a hidden rock
Where nought of danger I suspect—
Nor know it till I feel the shock!

But girls when trained to flirt, and catch
The wealthiest man that takes the bait,
Will, after they have made the match,
Flirt on for pastime, tempting fate.

And wives who love not ere they wed
How like they are to go astray,
To be by each false light misled,
To wander from the safer way.—

If she admires a dashing beau
How could she wed a man like me?—
If time for us once more might flow
I'd keep from all this turmoil free!

A LETTER from Sir James, to say,
They take my wife with them to stay.
Now this is very good indeed;
This is a friend, a friend in need!—
It has removed an anxious care
To know that she is sheltered there!—
They do me a most friendly turn,
For I so hurriedly took flight
I left it all to him!—I'll write,
And thank him for his kind concern.

THREE weary months! Oh! who shall tell
The sickening weight of woe they bore!
The constant sense of loneliness,
The want of all beheld no more,
The yearning of the secret soul
That shrank from every scene of mirth,
The vacant eye, the heedless ear,
The aching void, the bosom's dearth!

Three long, long months, and day by day
A canker preying on the heart!
The gnawing tooth of memory,
The form of her from whom I part.
Without—no thing but beauty there,
Within—a sense of dreary cold
To bind each happier impulse down,
And freeze the spirit by its hold!

Three trailing months! and through their course
This changeless load of care and gloom,
This living death, this dying life—
The festive board is like a tomb,
The brightest sunshine seems but chill,
And murky mist the lightest air,
The bridal peal a passing knell,
And hope itself is like despair!

I'm back again! I wrote to say
They might expect me back to-day,
And that I hoped my wife would be
Home in our house to welcome me.
Oh, how I longed to see her face!—
And how I dreaded, too, to trace
Some sign of reticence and care
To doom me still to dark despair—
To prove I had a rival there?

I never felt such qualms before !
I hardly dared to pass the door,
And when I saw her in the room
I was afraid to meet my doom !—
I knew not what to say or do,
  I did not venture to be fond—
Oh ! is she faithful ? Is she true ?
  Or must I evermore despond ?

Like simple friends, alas ! we met—
She did not seem to feel regret,
Nor did she say that she was glad
To see me back—I wish she had !—
Some slight remark about the train,
And we were silent once again.—
She scarcely even looked at me,
And then she poured me out some tea,
And then we spoke of Lady Græme—
But still the talk reluctant came ;
For she was frightened and constrained,
And I was sorely grieved and pained.

WHAT have I done to frighten Rose?—
She must have thought me most severe!—
She cannot love me!—All she shows
Is sad restraint and childish fear.

I was half mad that wretched day!—
I feel I acted much amiss
To rush so savagely away;—
I know not how to tell her this!

It was but giddiness and youth
Brought that about which made me go!—
I'm now convinced she spoke the truth,
And let me all her trespass know.

In her sweet eyes there dwells a look
Of almost angel innocence,
I read her soul as 'twere a book:
I take some little comfort hence;—

The wretched man that drew her on,
For him, at least, she did not care—
She only wanted to be gone
With anybody, anywhere.

But yet her conduct was not nice,
Nor nice the fruit from seed she's sown!—
Sir James came here to give advice,—
He'd better leave the thing alone!

He undertook to lecture me!
And told me to amuse my wife,
To let her run about and see
The Town, and lead a merry life!

His grand array I strove to rout,
But still he would the attack renew,
And so at last I turned him out—
And then I felt more sorry, too!

For he and I were firmest friends,
Now, also, I am in his debt.—
I know not how to make amends—
I scarcely can forgive him yet!

How could he come and dare advise,
And tell me what I ought to do!
My wife's behavior criticise,
And preach about her beauty too!

How dare he tell me she is vain,—
And my unkindness then infer,
And say her love I should retain
If I would stoop to flatter her!—

I found my wife was seated there!—
This makes the matter quite absurd!—
Rosa was resting in a chair
And all this conversation heard!

But people have a right to prate,
And we must be content to hear—

O! how the whole affair I hate
That makes them talk and interfere!

That made me rush away to Spain,
And my poor wife afraid of me;
And keeps us when I come again
As distant as we well can be.

Her father forced from her—consent,
But could not force her feelings too!—
And bitterly must I repent
That he my hasty offer drew!

I felt convinced he sounded me:—
But when our motives pure we know,
From dread too nice we might be free,
And trust to time our truth to show.

His was a most unworthy part—
To sacrifice his daughter's life,
To give her hand without a heart,
And make her in but name a wife!

Yet if for much of love you plead,
The world will talk about romance—
Position is the thing to heed;
Affection—that may come by chance.

Love matches—they are held in scorn!
The best that offers you should take!
And some poor daughters seem but born
To try a wealthy match to make!

POOR Rosa spoke to me to-night
And said she wishes to do right,
And she desires to please me too,
If I will tell her what to do.
I do believe she seeks the good—
I said I'd help her if I could—
But while my hopes were springing up,
She quickly dashed away the cup!
For having seriously begun,
Off at a tangent she must run,
And talk such nonsense with such glee,
I found she'd made a fool of me!
She had the shocking taste to say
There is in doing wrong a charm—
She makes me wonder every day
She has not come to greater harm!

She is so giddy and so vain,
From comment I could not refrain.—
She refuge in her beauty took,
And tried to conquer by a look;
This made me say in angry tone
I did not care for looks alone,
She might as well cast pearls to swine
As angle thus for love of mine;
For looks give promise, which she breaks—
And still by looks again re-makes.

How cruel was the wrong she did,
  Pretending love she could not feel;
Down in my soul the wound lies hid,
  Too deep, alas! for time to heal!

I DANCED with her to-night—a waltz—
  A foolish thing it was to do,
It made me feel how poor and false
  The life we led; for as I flew
Around with Rosa in my arms,
  The creature whom I love so much,
Her happy smiles, her youthful charms,
  The gay delight of step and touch
Bewildered me, and made the measure
A most enthralling, maddening pleasure!

Of course, it is not etiquette—
  One's own dear wife—I know 'twas wrong
To dance with Rose to-night—but yet
  Excuses which I make are strong.—
A ball there was at Mrs. Payne's
  And I had taken Rosa there,
For gladly would I make the chains
  Less heavy, which my wife must wear;—
And as she loves to gad about
I feel I ought to take her out.

A waltz was forming, and the band
  Struck up a most inviting strain—

A doorway watching as I stand,
I see her enter there again;
And with her comes the empty fop
With whom she vexed me much before,
And by his side she would not stop,
She left him just within the door.
He sought to lead her to the dance,
But she repulsed his vain advance.

She left him and she crossed to me,
Upon my arm she placed her hand,
And I was pleased at this degree
Of wifely trust—and half unmanned,—
And knowing how she loves to dance,
I put my arm about her waist
And mid the couples we advance.—
I did it thoughtlessly, in haste;
'Twas very foolish on my part,
It woke such longing in my heart!

The waltz itself it was not bad;
To dance with her was best of all,
She looked so happy and so glad,
She thought it an enchanting ball!—
What ecstasy I felt to-night!
To dance with Rosa is delightful!
Though some might wonder at the sight,
And that poor man be vexed and spiteful
To see her pleased though she discards
Captain Fitz-Maurice, of the Guards.

DEAR Rosa twitted me to-day
With my performance at the ball;
And, in reply, what could I say?
I scarce could answer her at all!—
She does not love, and cannot know
Of inly-bleeding wounds, the woe!—
My disappointed life drags on;
A breathing image at its side!
My early hope of joy is gone
A faultless statue for a bride!—
One look of love that beamed on me
Would better than all beauty be!

ONE time I was informed by Rose—
To some extent I own 'tis true—
That if to marry her I chose,
I ought to make her happy too.—
We've nought in common in our lives,
Our tastes and interests never blend!
I've ordered broughams for her drives,
Unless she goes with some kind friend,
For I am many hours away
And she is lonely in the day.

She, in herself, has few resources,
  Nothing to occupy her mind.—
If girls went through severer courses
  Of study, would it leave behind
A something to fall back upon?
  A love of deep and earnest books,
Now that the old regime is gone
  Which made them—housewives, doctors, cooks?
She has so little but her beauty!
  I scarcely know what I can do—
I'm anxious to perform my duty—
  I'd 'make her happy' if I knew!
But she is frightened! I was hard
  And harsh with her!—so said Sir James.
I've latterly been on my guard.
  I fully recognise her claims.—
It was before I went to Spain;
If those dark days came once again
I would be gentler! She should see
  Her faults and her I separate;
But she has grown afraid of me—
  My good intentions come too late!

ABLE to hold a pen once more!—
But many months have passed away
Since I an entry made before,
And now how much I have to say!
And all I say is glad and bright,
For all the wrong has turned to right!

I well remember that sad life
When Rose and I were kept apart,
But now my loving little wife
Is one with me in hand and heart!
I've won my wife!—I know not how!—
But nothing's sad or gloomy now!

There was a weary time of pain
And heavily the days went by,
I seemed to doze and wake again,
And lay in bed I knew not why;—
At times I did not know or care
What happened then, or who was there.

Until one evening I awoke
And saw dear Rosa near the bed.
I gazed upon the sun, and spoke,
Remarking it was very red.
And then she came and looked at me,
And something, when she looks, I see!

What was it in her glorious eyes
  Had taken up its residence?—
It filled me, first, with strange surprise,
  And then, with happiness intense,
For while I looked I read aright—
'Twas love for me that gave their light!

Oh! happy days in my sick room
  When this glad news had been received!
It banished care, it banished gloom—
  In pain itself I scarce believed,
For I could think of nothing then
But love—that came I know not when!

And oh! the rapture of the kiss
  She laid upon my thirsty lips!
It was the essence of all bliss,
  It tingled to my finger-tips!—
Its taste from hope it did not borrow,
For it was joy come out of sorrow!

And then she told me all the tale,
  That I had long been very ill—
And still her fears for me prevail,
  She says I must be careful still—
And when they brought me home, she said,
At first the doctors thought me dead.

And now she will not let me talk—
  She always liked to talk to me!—

And when I first essayed to walk,
My efforts she was scared to see.—
She strives to be the sternest nurse
That ever made a patient worse!

I love the serious, sober way
In which she would command assume,
I love her simple dress of grey
Which does not rustle in the room.
But to be stern!—she cannot do it!
Her gentleness comes smiling through it!

They tell me—but all that I knew—
When passing by, in neighboring street,
A child had fallen, and I flew
To save him from the horses' feet.
This I remembered very well,
And one thing more *they* could not tell.

That when on level of my eyes
Those horses' ugly hoofs I see
Immense ones are they, thrice the size
Of any hoofs beheld by me!
Some reason for the fact I sought,
And this became my latest thought.

Then was a time not all a blank,
For I was conscious of distress;
From movement and from noise I shrank,
I suffered dreadful weariness,

But scarcely knew what passed around—
Or how I got from off the ground.

That dancing paper on the wall—
I think that paper I'll remove—
I could not add it up at all,
Or if I did it would not prove!
I hate a pattern which will go
Diagonally to and fro!

A clock there was that struck the hour,
And seemed to strike them all the same,
And, somehow, had a sort of pow'r
To make them strike a person's name.—
That name in one sweet cadence fell,
And it was always—Rosa Bell.

From all these troubles, vague and true,
I woke to find dear Rosa mine!—
And were the thing again to do
I'd do it, and would not repine!
Better the sickness o'er and o'er,
Than lead the life we led before!

I TOLD my darling wife to-day
Of all the trouble and the pain
In that dark time, now far away,
When love could find no love again;—

Of all those hard and bitter days,
When we were pulling different ways;
And all my grief, long unassuaged,
And the internal war that raged
Taking my heart for battle-ground
And leaving harder than it found.—
She looked at me with loving eyes,
  But in those eyes were tears as well,
And more of sorrow than surprise;
  I kissed the tears before they fell!—
What joy when undivided life
Is led by loving man and wife!

At work again, and well and strong,
  And happy as the day is long!—
And rather long it seemed at first
  To be away from dearest Rose,
I'd been so petted and so nursed—
  But men must work—for so it goes,
And even with my charming wife
I should not like an idle life.

Some pleasant drives were those we had—
  And Rose admired my appetite!
One's convalescence is not bad
  With all around you gay and bright.

This joyful thing, too, happened there—
Sir James came up to speak to me
When I was propped in easy chair;—
He said he was quite glad to see
That I was getting round at last—
And thus our little feud blew past;
He shook me warmly by the hand—
We both regretted friendship broken,
And each could other understand
As if a thousand words were spoken.

The Medico, with solemn look,
Said, he must give me to the cook.
Why will some stupid men refuse
With cheerful air to tell good news?
One would have thought the undertaker
Was hinted at, and not the baker!

Dear Rosa red aloud to me—
The City article, and stocks
She would attempt, but I could see
She knows far more of gowns and frocks.

But sometimes, though, she'd rather chat,
And I did not object to that,
And learned to understand her ways
Much better than in former days.

My wife has taken to her books,
And works with energy and zeal;
I must not have her spoil her looks,
Nor let her work her roses steal.

Her studies may be very well,
But on her health they must not tell.

I took her home some pretty birds
  And much attached to them she grew;
She talks to them in broken words
  And they chirp back as if they knew!
I find she's very fond of pets—
Great pleasure from the things she gets.

She told me she had felt it hard
  To leave the country, and the air
We've made a garden in the yard—
  I doubt if it will flourish there;
She's proud enough, though, of her flow'rs—
And then she has such lonely hours!

What made her love me? Who can tell!—
  It is a source of wonder still!
She could not love when I was well
  And grew to love when I was ill.
What could it be?—I cannot think!
And yet from asking her I shrink.

What made her love me?—Can it be
  Her love was by my love begot?
Could it be anything in me?
  Or good in her? What was it! What!—
Whate'er it was, I'm happy so,
And need not greatly care to know!

THE birds and flowers are in danger!—
By an expected little stranger
Who some fine morning comes to town
They'll find themselves at once put down!—

Of Rose I take the greatest care,
She must have exercise and air;
Dear Lady Græme is very nice
And gives her matronly advice.—
I think I'll hide her books away
And bring them out some other day—
Yes, I must see to that indeed,
I cannot let dear Rosa read.—
But yet we must not rashly thwart her.—
And will it be a son, or daughter?

WHEN Rosa took to loving me
I'm sure we then were both agreed
No greater happiness could be
And that of nought beside we'd need.
But now we very plainly see
We then were only half content
And what we wanted, we agree,
Was but the baby that is sent.

To Rose she is a new-found toy,
And Rose is once again a child!—
She would have rather had a boy
She said,—but then the baby smiled,
Or if she did not smile we took
For smiling that most funny look—
And I am sure Rose would not change her
For any other little stranger!

She is to me a droll set out!
I scarcely know what I'm about
When her fond mother makes me 'take her,'—
I'd almost rather 'take' a pill,
For fear to pieces I should shake her,
Or do her some tremendous ill!

WHAT great responsibilities
Attach to this my new condition!
I look with due civilities
On 'Woman's Rights,' and 'Woman's Mission;'

And 'Women's Property;' and laws
For giving them consideration;—
There surely ought to be a clause
That they should govern all the nation

For women always govern men;
And then, beside,—we have a queen

And—lady-doctors, too; and then,—
We know that women's wits are keen.

And now they're all to be so skilled,
Boys will be beaten by a head!—
But, in whatever they are drilled,
Pray teach them this before they wed:—

That *loveless marriage is a crime,*
That *flirting is a 'false pretence.'*—
This is the evil of the time;
And rank the crops that spring up hence.

Now that I own a little daughter,
How can I tell what lies in store?
How many lovers she may slaughter—
And then turn round and ask for more!

No! she shall be sincere and true,
And like her mother as she grows,
But better trained, and taught to do
Not quite the same as did dear Rose.

For though at last it turned out well,
And she her husband learnt to love,
It was a chance!—No Major Bell
Shall train this pretty nestling dove.

The system surely has been shaped
To lead to misery and sin!
I feel I narrowly escaped
A quagmire sucking many in.

That time of agony in Spain?—
  Though smooth at last the troubled water
Those stormy days must still remain,—
  Her work not such, my little daughter!

No; though I may be much derided,
  I'll have my way with this, my own,
And on one point I am decided—
  My babe shall wed for love alone!

Nor shall this second Rosa be
  A flirt, whatever else they make her!
Rather than have her that, I'd see—
  The baby-farmer come and take her!

We will not care for gain and greed,
  Though sought by greatest in the land!—
But, as her inclinations lead
  So goes my little daughter's hand!

We have authority for this—
  And let us copy from above;—
And may that marriage end in bliss,
  The fruit alone of mutual love!